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SUPERSOCCER

AUSTRALIA'S BEST SELLING FOOTBALL WEEKLY

ITS' OFF

NSL revamp plans canned

By Bruce Campbell

THE controversial plans to introduce a 12 team NSL have been tossed into the can—according to an inside source at Soccer Australia HQ.

"It isn't going to happen," *SuperSoccer* was told.

"It isn't official yet and I suppose that there is always the chance that it will happen—but that chance is very slim.

"At this stage I would put my house on there being 14 teams next season and there is even a chance that it will be a 16 team league again."

With the earlier collapse of Victorian clubs Carlton and Eastern Pride 14 current teams were vying for the 12 places.

Both Canberra Cosmos and Brisbane Strikers were under threat but so too was Northern Spirits which would have been axed if Brisbane Lions were granted the Queensland place.

Reports leaked from Soccer Australia suggested that talks have been taking place about an increase for 2002 season with the possibility of another team from Western Australia being admitted.

And despite prophecies that one Sydney club would be axed the harbour city looks to be in a stronger position than eve.

Sydney Olympic are also tipped to end their nomadic days by making a final move to Sharks Park in Cronulla where they are likely to enter into a long term relationship with the local junior set-up.

"It has been a good wake-up call to the current NSL clubs," added Soccer Australia chairman Tony Labbozzetta.

"They have a need to improve and they know that.

"If the league isn't restructured next season they still know just how much work has to be done.

"And if the game is stronger because of that then that is something.

"The game has to improve, we all know that."

It is unlikely that Soccer Australia will make any official announcement until after the Championship Series is over.

SOCCER Australia chairman Tony Labbozzetta: he isn't confirming that plans to ditch the radical revamp have been dumped—but then he isn't denying it either.

IT'S ON...

historical series re-ignited after 32 year gap

By Bruce Campbell

NSW coach Brian Brown has chosen a 16-man squad for the upcoming two match interstate series against Victoria and Queensland.

New South Wales will play Victoria at Epping Stadium, Melbourne on June 2 and then Queensland at Blacktown's Gabbie Stadium on June 16.

Matches between Victoria and New South Wales date back to 1883 when the first ever 'inter-colonial' challenge was held, making it the oldest interstate series in Australian soccer history.

In all, 32 matches have been played with the SoccerBlues notching up 12 wins, including the record 10-0 win in 1936, seven draws and thirteen wins by Victoria.

The last match played was in 1969 when a 2-2 draw was played out in Melbourne, giving NSW a 38-year period of ascendancy, due in no small part to the fact that no games have been played since '69.

"We have got a good squad and I am really looking forward to the games," said Blues coach Brian Brown.

"Being an ex-Melbourne player I will have a thousand of my pals there at Epping so we will be looking to put on a good show."

The majority of the NSW squad is made up of players chosen from this year's Premier League Grand Finalists, Blacktown City and Bonnyrigg White Eagles.

New South Wales
Goalkeepers: John Crawley (Blacktown City), Darren Moore (Central Coast).
Defenders: Paul Dee (Blacktown City), Damien Foxe (Blacktown City), Paul Yates (Blacktown City), Tayfun Devrimol (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Vuko Tomasevic (Leichhardt Tigers), Dane Hokin (Central Coast).
Midfielders: James Stubbs-Mills (Leichhardt Tigers), Javier Mancino (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Devrim Huseyin (Bonnyrigg White Eagles), Daniel Cummins (Melita Eagles), John Kyriazopoulos (Canterbury).
Forwards: Steve Lazzari (Belconnen), Darren Iocca (Blacktown City), Robert Gomez (Bonnyrigg White Eagles).
Officials: Laki Konistis— team manager, Brian Brown—coach, Tom McMorrow—assistant coach, David Hughes—physio.

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Power look to overseas trip to get new start

By Frank Risorto

PARRAMATTA Power coach David Mitchell hopes their end-of season trip to China and Singapore will help his players prepare for next season in the National Soccer League.

The Power will be playing several games in China and taking part in a sevens tournament in Singapore and after a season of inconsistency Mitchell believes the trip will provide invaluable experience to the younger players in his side.

"We will play a few games and have a look at some of our trial players as well," Mitchell said.

"It will also be a good thing for all the players, especially the young ones to experience playing football in different conditions.

"We're not looking for any new players but it will help me with some sort of idea of how next year's squad will look as well."

Mitchell promoted several of his young guns in the last three weeks of the NSL season, whether through injury or suspension.

The performances of Brendon Santalab, Michael Brown and Liam Reddy is a promising sight for coach Mitchell.

"I'm very happy with how they have handled the step up," he says.

"The draw against Northern Spirit was a shame because I thought we deserved to get the three points. We had a very promising end to the season with the victory over Perth.

"It was a good way to finish the season with a victory over Perth and it showed we weren't a bad side after all."

With former Carlton coach Stuart Munro now joining Lawrie McKinna as assistant coach, Mitchell believes the club can only benefit from the added experience.

"That's one big thing he has brought to the club, that's his experience on and off the field," Mitchell said.

"His experience on the field will be vital to all the players especially the young ones.

"I don't think when the club was started we anticipated what a big job looking after 36 full time footballers including our 10 apprentices would be.

"We needed help with a second assistant coach.

"Stuart and Lawrie in their joint roles as assistant coaches will do very well."

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United prepare for gold rush with new strip

BY OLIVER KAY

MANCHESTER United, having experimented with what seems like all the colours of the rainbow, are going for gold next season with a unique reversible kit to mark their "centenary" year.

Ever alert to marketing opportunities, the club yesterday unveiled two new away strips for the price of one, a shirt that is white on one side and gold on the reverse — a concession, perhaps, to the thousands of parents concerned by the frequency with which the kit has been changed in recent years.

This strip will only be worn for one season, as an alternative to the usual red, because Nike is due to take over from Umbro as the club's official kit suppliers at the end of the campaign.

Although United were formed in 1878, as Newton Heath LYR, not until next year will they reach their hundredth anniversary under their existing name.

It was rumoured that the gold strip, designed by Liam Caine, a 17-year-old supporter and graphic design student, would be worn exclusively for matches in the Champions League, but a club spokesman said: "The main away kit will be the white version, but the gold strip will be worn when there is a clash with the red and the white strips, for example against teams such as Southampton and Sunderland."

Peter Draper, United's group marketing director, said: "We are delighted the inspiration for the kit has come from one of our fans. We're sure all our supporters will be eager to see the team wear it next season."

LAST WEEK'S AUSTRALIAN PLAYER TRANSFERS

OFFICIALLY REPORTED
Robbie Gomez (Bonnyrigg to Fairfield Bulls)
PRESS/CLUB REPORTED
Robert Trajkovski (Perth Glory-Northern Spirit effective June)

MULVEY APPOINTED AS NATIONAL YOUTH COACH

WOMEN'S Soccer Australia has appointed Michael Mulvey as National Youth Coach, to lead the Young Matildas campaign for the inaugural FIFA Women's World Youth Championship next year.

Mulvey is the current Head Coach of the Queensland Academy of Sport women's soccer program and will remain in that position whilst undertaking his new role.

WSA sought to appoint from within its existing pool of National Training Centre Coaches in recognition of their integral role in developing young talent.

Mulvey's tenure in the first instance runs until the completion of the Oceania qualifying tournament for the World Youth Championship, scheduled for April 2002.

Subject to qualification and performance, this will be extended to include the World Youth Championship finals tournament.

His appointment is effective immediately.

"I'm honoured and very proud," said Mulvey.

"It's a great opportunity for myself and a great opportunity for Australia, because we've got the chance to go to a Youth World Cup.

"All my energies will go into us qualifying.

"These are exciting times.

"It's a real stepping stone now for the senior national team.

"It gives young kids something to really aim for."

Mulvey has headed QAS women's soccer since the beginning of 1999, and previously served three years as the programme's Assistant Coach.

Last December he guided Queensland Sting to the coveted WNSL title after an undefeated season.

FIFA confirmed the establishment of its first women's youth event late last year, and recently awarded the hosting rights to Canada.

The Under 19 championship will take place in August/September 2002, and will be held every two years.

FIFA estimates approximately ninety countries will contest the event in the qualifying rounds.

Perth hit the back pages

LAST week the turmoil which had been brewing in the west finally hit the fan with the news that Perth Glory had sacked both general manager Roger Le Fort and former Northern Spirit official Manny Zammit.

On the field there was also controversy with the likelihood that Robert Trajkovski, now bound for Northern Spirit, will have played his last game for the club.

Glory also entered the transfer market, seeking Wollongong's explosive forward, Scott Chipperfield.

At one stage it looked as if Lefort had resigned but he was quick to clarify the situation, stipulating that he had in fact been sacked.

"I wish to make it quite clear that I have not resigned," he told press.

Lefort, who has been at the helm of the club since its inception in 1995, and football manager Manny Zammit, were causalities of Glory chairman Nick Tana's dictatorial management style and the latest in a long line of off-field dramas that have dogged the club.

Tana has shown a willingness to use his majority 75 per cent shareholding to overrule the three man board when his ideas are rejected and his proposed restructure was no exception.

"The restructure has been my decision and one I believe is in the best long term interests of Perth Glory as we move to the next level in the club's development," he said.

"The next level of Perth Glory will be a sporting club that is comparable to any AFL or European club."

The news sparked a heated press conference in which Tana refused to answer any questions and overshadowed an announcement from club captain Gareth Naven that the player group had foregone their usual match bonuses in favour of a two-tiered multi-million incentive scheme that would see the group receive a bulk bonus for winning the NSL final and another for qualifying for the world club championship.

"As captain of the Perth Glory I am delighted that the players have demonstrated that they are completely focussed on the championship and have refused to contemplate anything less," Naven said.

Naven was adamant the management upheaval would not affect the team's preparation for the NSL finals.

"It's not our business, whatever decisions the board and chairman make is up to them," he said.

Perth coach Bernd Stange also entered the media war, saying that he believes Soccer Australia's handling of collapsed NSL clubs Carlton and Eastern Pride has cost the Glory a second place finish and the chance of a home Grand Final.

And he said Soccer Australia's inept handling of the NSL was damaging the sport's credibility in Australia and costing it corporate support.

The Glory finished the regular season equal second on 61 points with last year's Grand Final victors Wollongong, but was relegated to third place on goal difference.

According to Stange, Wollongong were able to leapfrog the Glory because they were awarded a 3-0 forfeited victory over Eastern Pride, while the Glory had to settle for the 2-1 result they achieved when the struggling club were still able to field a team.

Stange believes Soccer Australia should have dealt with Eastern Pride's collapse in the same manner as early-season departure of Carlton, when all results were wiped clean and every club received a 3-0 result.

"If they treated Eastern Pride the same as Carlton we are clearly second, Soccer Australia cost us a chance of a home grand final because they decided on two different things for one matter," he said.

"What they did with Carlton was fair, they took all the points and goals away and gave all clubs the same.

"It's no different with Eastern Pride, it doesn't matter if one club collapses on the seventh fixture or another in March late in the season.

"It's an anti-competitive practice."

Stange was left to lament the club's 2-1 victory over Eastern Pride when stars Scott Miller and Damian Mori were absent on national duty.

Stange conceded he might face a fine for his remarks and said he had nothing but respect for Wollongong and South Melbourne but he believes the sport's powerbrokers were damaging its reputation.

"It's another reason for me to think we have the wrong people there who handle the NSL," he said.

Sydney United and Kingz bid for Blanco

By Bruce Campbell

FORMER Olyroo and caretaker national team boss Raul Blanco has emerged as one of the front runners for the soon-to-be vacant Football Kingz manager's job.

Blanco's position firmed after axed Carlton boss and former Glasgow Rangers defender Stuart Munro quashed reports that he is poised to coach the Football Kingz.

The former Carlton coach is currently working as one of two assistant coaches at Parramatta Power and has signed a contract to stay with the Power for another national soccer league season.

Munro said he had initially applied for the job at the Kingz when it was advertised months ago.

However, he had since withdrawn that application when he took up the post with Parramatta.

Now Blanco looks to have secured a real tilt at the job, created by the decision of Kingz management to sack current incumbent, Wynton Rufer.

But the NZ side, which is considering a relocation to Wellington, might have some stiff competition from Sydney United.

Blanco has recently become a target for the west Sydney club who have had three coaches already this season—Alan Hunter, Velimir Kupresak and Tony Pezzano.

Pezzano will almost certainly not consider making a serious bid for the job next season leaving a clear field for Blanco.

And last week Sydney United officials held further talks with the Argentinian born coach.

It s also believed that a top NSW Premier League club has made a bid for Blanco's services.

Meanwhile Branko Culina has ruled out a move to Newcastle United, preferring instead to see out the final year of his contract at Sydney Olympic.

Olympic looks set to relocate to Sharks Park, Cronulla next season and Culina has put together a fine side which could well blend into a strong championship contender.

Former Wollongong boss Nick Theodorakopolous had been tipped to take over at Olympic if Culina moved on but he could well land the Newcastle post, with his name being linked to the rookie club over the last few months.

It is also rumoured that former Spirit player Ian Crook is the number two candidate for Newcastle but is baulking at making a final decision, with his name also being linked to Perth Glory.

Glory assistant coach Mitch D'Avray is also favoured at Perth with Bernd Stange almost certain to be coaching his last season.

Perth owner Nick Tana has said that Stange will only b offered a new contract if he "wins the Grand Final."

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Lynwood Park 7:00PM 5:00PM 3:00PM
Sunday 13 May
Bankstown City Lions v Hurstville City Minotaurs
Jensen Park 6:00PM 4:00PM 2:00PM
Fairfield Bulls v Stanmore Hawks
Nineveh Field 3:00PM 1:00PM 11:00AM
Dulwich Hill v Hajduk Wanderers
Arlington Oval 3:00PM 1:00PM 11:00AM
Rockdale City Suns v AC United
Rockdale Ilinden Sports Gd 3:00PM 1:00PM 11:00AM
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Hickman slashes Spirit playing staff

FINISHING 13th has proved unlucky for at least 12 players from the underachieving Northern Spirit, with coach Mick Hickman telling them to find another club last Friday.

Hickman, who took over the coaching reins from Graham Arnold in February said finishing 13th for the second year in a row was unacceptable and something drastic needed to be done to reverse the trend.

"Something drastic" meant John Perosh, Michael Cunico, Matthew Langdon, Daniel Watkins, Joe Schirripa and Todd Macrae were all shown the door.

On-loan striker Ben Burgess will return to Blackburn Rovers, who will return to the English premier league next season, as will Stuart Howson, while Lee Feeney goes back to Glasgow Rangers.

Paul Bilokapic, who was on loan to Sydney United, has also been told he's not part of Hickman's plans.

Add to this the expectation that Chi Chi Mendez will move to Monaco and veteran Robbie Slater will struggle to come back after an off-season knee operation.

Tony Faria and Adam Snyder were surplus to requirements in the purge and were released to the Manly Warringah Dolphins in the NSW State League.

The players were informed by Hickman at North Sydney Oval on Friday.

"A club like Northern Spirit, which has high goals and ambitions, needs to have a successful football team and unfortunately it has been two lean seasons with poor results," Hickman said.

"It was not an easy morning, but I know it is in the best interests of the Northern Spirit Football Club that we rebuild and get a competitive team that is ready to go when the season starts in October.

"I think everyone at the club, from the coaching staff to the fans, to the officials realise that we needed to make significant changes to the squad if we are to go forward.

"We have already signed Robert Trajkovski and there will be more to come."

The Perth Glory wingback agreed to a two-year deal and Hickman was hopeful he could pick up several more players in the next two weeks to rebuild the under-achieving national soccer league side.

"He (Trajkovski) is a player we identified as a priority signing," said Hickman.

"He is a proven performer in the NSL and the type of player we are trying to attract to Northern Spirit as we try to build a competitive side for next season.

"We are close to securing a few more players, both from Australia and overseas."

A veteran of 159 NSL matches for Perth, Carlton, Brunswick and Sydney United, Trajkovski made three international appearances for the Socceroos in 1997-98.

He will play as a right-sided wingback or on the right side of the Spirit's midfield, an area that was weakened this season after former Socceroo Robbie Slater missed all but seven matches through knee and foot injuries.

"Robbie is one of the best right sided players in the league and he will do a good job for us up and down the right flank," Hickman added.

"We are signing players for particular positions, not just trying to sign the best players and he will sit nicely in our side on the right hand side."

Northern Spirit has also retained talented Joeys Matthew Hunter, Jacob Rex, Matthew Engele and Alex Wilkinson on two year deals.

"Northern Spirit needs to have a successful football team and unfortunately it has been two lean seasons with poor results"

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FIFA broker Greece deal

By Jeremy Gaunt

GREECE will continue to play in the World Cup and will not be suspended from international soccer, FIFA announced.

"The imminent suspension of the Greek FA from international football activity has been averted with the signature of a Joint Declaration by the Greek Government, the Greek FA and FIFA," FIFA said in a statement.

Greece were in danger of being suspended because of problems between the Greek government and Greek football association (EPO).

Monday's agreement followed a meeting at the headquarters of FIFA, world soccer's governing body, chaired by FIFA president Sepp Blatter who met the Greek sports minister Georgios Floridis and EPO headed by its President Konstantinos Alexandridis and General Secretary Vassilis Gagatsis.

In Greece, Culture Minister Evangelos Venizelos welcomed the deal between EPO and the government.

Madrid sack coach after prospects dim

Atletico Madrid sacked coach Marcos Alonso last week after they dropped seven points behind the promotion places in the Spanish second division.

"Bar a miracle we have said goodbye to promotion and to say anything else would only be fooling ourselves," Atletico president Jesus Gil told
Spanish radio station Onda Cero.

"From this moment on Atletico needs a fundamental restructuring.

"This season has been one disaster after another.

"If I had had my way I would have sacked the coach long ago."

Gil added Alonso would be replaced by his assistant Emilio Cruz, who takes charge until the end of the season.

Cruz becomes the 25th man to hold the post since Gil took over at the club in 1987.

Last Saturday Gil had said that he would sack Alonso if he could following the team's disappointing 3-0 home defeat to Murcia.

But he was persuaded by the club's technical director Paulo Futre to keep the coach on.

The Atletico president, however, changed his mind after Sunday's 2-0 win by Tenerife over Elche meant that Atletico dropped further behind in the race for promotion.

Alaves, the little club with less to lose

By Patrick Barclay

EVEN IN a town as prosperous as Vitoria-Gasteiz, a business can fail.

But it was not so much the shop's bolted-and-barred front that bore the message as the forlorn sign above the door: "Football Mania".

There is no such affliction in the capital of the Basque province from which Deportivo Alaves, arguably Europe's team of the season whatever happens against Liverpool in Dortmund this month, take their name.

This is not to say the people of Alava lack pride in the team's exploits, merely to note that, despite their having reached the UEFA Cup final only 11 years after emerging from Spain's semi-professional fourth division, their stadium has yet to make full use of its 19,200 capacity.

And to report that Alaves are still not quite the hottest sporting ticket in town: that distinction is retained by Tau Baskonia, the basketball team.

Alaves must feel a little like Seve Ballesteros did when, with the Open won and the world of golf at his feet, he came second in a poll for Santander's sportsman of the year to an Olympic sailing medallist.

But they are more accustomed to celebrating basketball than football in Vitoria (it is simpler to choose between its Spanish and Basque names and offence seems hard to give in a place that, unlike Bilbao and San Sebastian, votes conservative rather than nationalist).

On bar walls are plenty of photographs, ancient and modern, of elongated heroes in vests.

By contrast the football club have never won a major prize.

If they have to find room for the UEFA Cup, it will displace mementoes to obscure participation.

What has made the difference?

In essence a revered coach, Jose Manuel Esnal, and his "technical secretary", Juan Carlos Rodriguez, who searches far and wide for potent players at bargain prices.

His eye was never sharper than in discerning that an overweight and injury-prone striker obtainable for $A30,000 could be transformed into the Spanish international Javi Moreno, valued at $A18 million-plus.

But heavy-legged from completing their 9-2 aggregate triumph over Kaiserslautern in Germany, Alaves lost at home to Malaga and in training the morning after Javi Moreno looked troubled.

As the coach put an arm around his shoulders and listened, you had a clue to how this engaging fellow, known as Mane, has united and coaxed the best out of his players.

"It has taken us four years," he said, "to perfect our teamwork.

"Of course, we don't have the tradition of Liverpool - their record stands comparison with even the great Spanish clubs - but it helps that people don't expect us to win."

Mane was not being cute.

What people do expect - and I heard this a few times - is that Alaves will lose Mane to Valencia in the summer, and then the pick of his team, and that by next spring they will be heading for relegation rather than a European final.

It was ventured in a spirit of realism rather than cynicism and I must say that to encounter such a perspective was refreshing, a pleasant change from the tendency in other places (some close to home) to treat sporting success as a short-cut to euphoria.

Having travelled the day after a trip to Portman Road, I found Vitoria to be Ipswich without the fervour, if a bit bigger (population 215,000).

Nearly 20 years ago Patrick Cobbold, then chairman of Ipswich Town, was asked to define what would constitute a crisis at the club.

"Well," he replied, "if we ran out of white wine in the boardroom . . ."

A similar criterion might be adopted by the people of Vitoria.

They could live without Alaves, Tau Baskonia even, but if ever some kind of prohibition order were applied, closing the extraordinary proliferation of bars, cafes and restaurants in the old town where they love to shelter from the rain and chatter, they would be utterly dismayed, lost.

Suitably, the Alaves president, Gonzalo Anton, is a restaurateur.

For good measure he owns a vineyard and it was his determination to improve the club's yield that persuaded Mane to come, get Alaves promoted and, without further delay, into Europe.

He already had a reputation for lifting modest clubs.

Asked why he should only now have become the talk of Spain, he replied: "I don't know - I suppose the longer you work in football, the more you learn.

"And the better the players, the more you can achieve.

"It's easy to be in charge of a big club when you can spend lots of money.

"We have to operate at the cheaper end of the market.

"You can still find talented players there.

"But you have to be even more careful in ascertaining their character.

"It's a delicate, demanding task and my technical secretary has to be really tuned in.

"Without his judgement it wouldn't have been possible to do what we've done."

To stalwarts from the bad old days have been added a South American contingent featuring the Uruguayan Ivan Alonso, Romania's Cosmin Contra, Norway's Dan Eggen, Jurica Vucko and Ivan Tomic from Croatia while Jordi Cruyff, late of Manchester United, came free.

The total outlay, over three years, has been less than the £11 million Liverpool paid for Emile Heskey last March.

It would be ridiculous to assess them on the basis of a performance against Malaga in which only Oscar Tellez's passing from the back impressed.

But they rely on teamwork to mask flaws, notably a shortage of creativity in midfield, and its effectiveness can be demonstrated by a list of European victims: Rosenborg and Internazionale as well as Kaiserslautern, all beaten on their own soil as if to emphasise that Alaves will not quail when their supporters are heavily outnumbered in Dortmund.

Mane conceded that a club of such size could hardly sustain success.

"Like a mountain range, we will have peaks and valleys," he said.

"Because the players have done so well this year, some will probably be with clubs of a higher class next year and the replacements will be less experienced. It's difficult."

Would he stay to rebuild?

Or hit the big-time at last?

Mane's smile faded, but he answered as frankly as he could.

"Since I went into coaching at 23," he said, "I have worked with 25 or 26 teams.

"Every year a different one.

"Because I've always been with modest clubs and, when the players are successful, they go, and I start again.

"So the prospect of having to do that, wherever I am, doesn't frighten me.

"The most important factor is that I am able to develop my work.

"So I must have a very direct relationship with the president or his assistant.

"There must be no interference from a lot of vice-presidents, or players' agents getting in the way.

"I'm not interested in the kind of club where that happens."

He has already studied recordings of both legs of Liverpool's semi-final against Barcelona.

"I know how they play," he says.

"I can see the spine is fundamental.

"I just need to keep watching until I find some defects."

"I'm optimistic, it's a one-off and we're going to be very well prepared for it.

"Maybe the FA Cup final will drain them - it depends on the result. But I do know we have less to lose."

FIFA award special armband

A special armband will be worn by the most-capped international still playing for his country, currently Egypt's Hossam Hassan, FIFA has said.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter and former France captain Michel Platini presented Hassan with a souvenir medal, a diploma and the armband on Sunday in Cairo at the laying of the foundation stone for the new African Football Confederation headquarters.

The armband "will serve to mark him out as a still active national team player holding the world record in the number of times he has played for his national team", a FIFA statement said.

"This armband will be worn henceforth to indicate the still active national team player who holds the world record in international appearances."

Hassan became the most capped soccer player of all time on January 9 when he earned his 151st cap for Egypt.

The previous record of 150 was set by Germany's Lothar Matthaeus.

PFA hold talks over NSL future

NEGOTIATIONS for a new National Soccer League Collective Bargaining Agreement continued in Sydney last Friday, with the NSL, the NSL clubs and the Australian Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) determined to strike a new deal that will address many of the big challenges facing the game.

"We have a unique opportunity to advance the game through a genuine partnership between the clubs and the players," Ian Knop, Chairman of the Player Relations Committee (PRC), the club's representative body, said.

"We are determined to ensure that the new Collective Agreement presents an exciting step forward for the game, especially in the light of the restructure and re-launch of a reformed NSL."

PFA Chief Executive, Brendan Schwab said that the PFA's overriding objective is to ensure that soccer is the career of choice for Australia's elite young athletes.

"We are anxious to ensure that playing at NSL level complements the unique international opportunities professional soccer presents," Schwab said.

"However, the well being of the NSL is essential to the well-being of the players.

"We therefore clearly understand that we can't move forward without addressing the bigger picture".

To enable the talks to be completed within a workable timeframe, the current Collective Agreement will be extended by 3 months.

It will now expire on 30 September 2001.

Soccer NZ charter plane after sponsor collapses

NEW Zealand Soccer introduced their own special flights last weekend to support the NZNL in the wake of Qantas New Zealand's collapse.

Soccer NZ chartered a plane last weekend to deliver teams around the country.

The special flight travelled to Auckland, Wellington and Palmerston ferrying players and officials back and forwards.

Qantas NZ was the major sponsor of the league until it folded two weeks ago.

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By Frank Risorto

ROCKDALE City Suns Dean Culina believes he made the right decision continue playing football.

"I was very close to quitting so personally it's good to get back to playing regularly in a football team again," said Culina.

"I was at Northern Spirit for two seasons and I didn't really play that much.

"I played no games under Graham Arnold because he wasn't prepared to give me a go.

"He wanted to play himself and it turned out to be a horror season anyway.

"But everything at Northern Spirit was great, a real professional outfit and they looked after the players well."

But for the 23-year-old it's quite a step down from the National Soccer League to the New South Wales Super League.

He believes the move wasn't as bad as what he had first anticipated.

"I wasn't playing regularly and was close to quitting the game and then somebody form Rockdale contacted me," he says.

"They said just come and have a run and see how you go.

"So I just live up the road and thought why not and at first I didn't really know what to expect at Rockdale.

"But Rockdale are pretty good for a Super League club and it's obviously not as good as the NSL but they're not that far behind.

"For a club this size it's definitely not as bad as what I thought it would be, everything's organised and the club is really well run."

Dean's father Branko coaches Sydney Olympic and is well known throughout the football fraternity and Dean believes it's no longer a hindrance, as he's quite used to attention he gets with the name Culina.

"Yeah it's no problem because I think I have proved to a lot of people that I can play football," Culina said.

"My dad has come to watch me play a few times this year.

"But he's happy to stay in the background and not get involved.

"If he sees something wrong he might tell me that an area need improving in my game, but he's good to have in the background to ever ask for advice."

With Rockdale City Suns currently sitting on the top of the NSWSL table after seven games Culina believes everybody at the club is riding high.

"We are winning so everybody at the club is happy," says Culina.

Bradley is happier in Australia than Germany or the States

By Frank Risorto

BANKSTOWN City player Chris Bradley could be excused for forgetting where he is.

At the age of 28 Bradley has experienced more diversity in his career than some would do so in their whole football life.

Bradley, a new acquisition of the ever improving Bankstown City Lions, has spent time at several clubs from Australia to Germany, and even the USA.

Playing with Blacktown at the beginning of last season, he was frustrated with the lack of first team football and switched to rivals Bonnyrigg six weeks into the season.

"I had a deal with Blacktown that if I wasn't getting any games I could go elsewhere," Bradley said.

"I knew I wasn't get much of a look in and decided to go, I was close to going to Parramatta but decided on Bonnyrigg."

Since then Bradley has won a Premier League Championship and joined Bankstown City for the Super League season.

"They were always in contact with me and the coach Claudio Canosa had been asking me to come here so I did," he says.

"I wasn't here at the start of the season and I've only played three games so far because I've been injured but have enjoyed my time here so far.

"Claudio is a great coach and it seems that the players have really responded to him.

"We did start slow but look to be getting better with each week we play and hopefully we'll just keep improving."

Before his time with Blacktown Bradley spent time in Germany with Bayer Ueidingen.

"I went over when I was 17 and after about a year I got homesick," Bradley said.

"There's a pharmaceutical company there called Bayer and everybody in the town works for them.

"I didn't fancy myself working in a lab.

"I was there in the 1989-90 season when the Berlin Wall come down.

"And plus that I didn't think that playing there was worth all the sacrifices I had made with missing the weather, friends and family, so I came home."

Back in Australia, Bradley was playing with the Marconi reserve side when he undertook a backpacking trip with friends going through Europe and the United States, where he spent time playing in a local league and helping with coaching clinics.

"I was playing a game and the coach of the University of San Francisco was in the crowd and that day I played quite well," he says..

"I was 22 at the time and really went to have a good time and enjoy myself.

"So he offered me a full scholarship so I was studying Business Finance and was being looked after as well.

"We were playing in the College League which is the First Division in the USA under the Major League Soccer.

"The players were great and we weren't allowed to train seven days a week but you have everything taken care of.

"There are full time doctors, physicians and diet specialists looking after the team, you are flown around the country and are put up in hotels, it's all very professional.

"The one big difference is the players are very physically fit.

"One strength of mine is that I'm a good long distance runner and I was probably the only one at Bonnyrigg but in the USA there was probably about six or seven who were really good.

"Same goes for speed, there's always two or three who are really quick but in USA there's probably about seven or eight in each team who are really quick.

"It was a great experience but the problem in the USA is that they have no league to look up to. We are always seeing European leagues on television and have had players to look up to and things we might want to try and copy.

"They are starting from scratch and aren't looking up to anybody or aren't aware of any of the history, but it's definitely getting better.

"But I had no ambition to play in the MLS and was more than happy to come back to Australia."

2001 Kanga Cup

International Youth Soccer Tournament
Canberra Australia
July 8 - July 15

KANGA CUP
CANBERRA AUSTRALIA

The 11th year of Australia's greatest International Youth Soccer Tournament kicks off in Canberra on the 8th of July.
The tournament lasts for a week and caters for boys and girls from under 11 to the under 24 age group.
Already teams have confirmed participation as the reputation of the tournament continues to gain worldwide recognition.

SOCCER CANBERRA

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Sunday 13th May
At Hammondville Oval
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Games commence at 11.00 am Under 18s,
1.00 pm Under 21s and 3.00 pm First Grade

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Experience unites at Fraser Park

By Frank Risorto

FRASER Park's season is yet to take off according to player Steve McCombe.

McCombe believes they will get better as the season progresses.

"We have started off slowly but we have got several new players to come into the side," says McCombe.

"It will take some time to adapt to each other but hopefully we will do that soon."

McCombe arrived at Fraser Park after Eastern Suburbs folded last season but is familiar with the club after playing there 10 years ago and is expecting to do well at the club after their opening win.

"We certainly have the potential of players to do well," he said. "Our side has a lot of new players but we are very experienced.

"There's isn't one player who has been around for a while with the exception of a few of the younger guys.

"Most of our team are around their late 20s and early 30s so we are very experienced and we can't use that as an excuse.

McCombe has so far been impressed by several players but believes Fraser Park and the other clubs will improve as the season goes on.

"We have a few players coming in from the Premier League season so when they do it will strengthen the side," McCombe said.

"But that will happen all over the league so everybody will be improving in the next month or so.

"And it's good for the standard of the league but each player has pressure on them to perform, so hopefully our performances will get better as well."

REAL COACH QUASHES VIDUKA TRANSFER TALK

SUPER AUSSIE MARK VIDUKA: his name has rarely been out the headlines all across Europe in the last few weeks

LEEDS striker Mark Viduka, reportedly a summer target for several top European clubs, is unlikely to move to Real Madrid after the Spanish club's coach criticised the Australian's midweek Champions League performance.

Viduka, who has scored 21 goals for Leeds this season, has been linked with Italian giants Roma and AC Milan as well as Real in the past few months, with all purported to be interested in signing the striker.

But despite the rumours surrounding Viduka, signed from Celtic for £6 million ($A16.7 million) last summer, Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale has vehemently denied there has been any bid or enquiry.

However, Real general manager Jorge Valdano claimed last Thursday that Leeds demanded £18.5 million ($A51.6 million) for Viduka when they made a recent enquiry for him after he impressed in United's two group defeats to the Spanish giants.

But Real coach Vicente Del Bosque was far from impressed with Viduka after watching his performance in Wednesday's goalless draw against Valencia in the first leg of the Champions League semi-final.

"Mark Viduka disappointed me in that match," Del Bosque was quoted as saying in Friday's Daily Mail.

"I remember when he played against us at the Santiago Bernabeu, he was almost a perfect striker. But since then, I think he has become worse and worse as the season has gone on. For this match he did not seem very focused, and nor did Alan Smith."

When asked whether Viduka was worth the apparent £18.5 million ($A51.6 million) quoted, which Ridsdale has again denied, Del Bosque replied: "No, I don't think so."

Only last week Spanish media tried to get Viduka to pose in a Real shirt, an offer which was flatly refused and even led to the 25-year-old describing such a move as "a bit sneaky."

Del Bosque has also played down Leeds' chances of reaching the final at the San Siro in Milan on May 23, believing Valencia are now favourites to reach the final.

But a repeat of last season's showdown between Real and Valencia is not on the cards, according to Del Bosque given that his side trail Bayern Munich 1-0 in the other semi final.

"Last night was a good result for Valencia," added Del Bosque. "After Bayern, Valencia must be considered the second favourites to reach the final.

YOUTH LEAGUE
with Laki Konistis

MARCONI STALLIONS CANTERING IN 2001

THIS week we feature one of this country's best and most popular soccer clubs, namely the Marconi Stallions, in their most recent contests in both the Pepsi Super Youth and Cadet League competitions against another NSL club the Wollongong Wolves, whom they entertained at Marconi last weekend..

UNDER 11s:
The first clash in which both teams have been going very well and in fact were separated by just four points always promised to be a most intriguing opening encounter.

It was the home side courtesy of a well-taken penalty who opened the scoring but the Wolves levelled before half time.

The second half saw chances to both teams but in the end it was the Wolves who converted them to remain unbeaten in the competition with a well deserved 3-1 victory.

UNDER 12s:
The remaining Cadets clash saw the competition leaders, the Marconi Stallions maintain their undefeated run with a hard fought 2-0 victory.

Going in locked 0-0 at the break and the Wolves looking menacing this game was up for grabs.

But the Stallions rallied in the second half to take the points on offer.

The young Stallions have already notched an impressive eight match winning sequence in this division and must surely be the team to beat at this early stage.

UNDER 13s:
Both NSL clubs came into this clash with three wins apiece, and were separated by just three points.

But it was the visitors who capitalised best on their opportunities presented running away 4-1 winners in the end.

Tayfun Buykkopru opened the scoring for Marconi but then Wollongong's David Miller helped himself to a hat-trick as the Wolves ran out conclusive winners.

UNDER 14s:
Although the Stallions were placed higher in this division, the Wolves too were coming into this clash with pretty good form also and to further complicate proceedings the heavens opened making attractive football difficult under slippery conditions.

With both attacks therefore being nullified goals were always going to be at a premium, and in the end a clever Marconi substitution was the catalyst for the only goal of the game as Marconi hung on for a 1-0 victory.

UNDER 15s:
This game was a replay of last year's Semi Final, but the Marconi Stallions had little problem accounting for the Wollongong Wolves in this clash, running out convincing 3-0 winners in the end.

Andrew De Marco opened Marconi's account, a lead the Stallions held going into the break.

Two further well-taken goals in the second half gave the Stallions a final 3-0 victory.

Just like their Under 12s, this side too remains unbeaten so far in 2001 and has also strung together an impressive eight match winning sequence.

UNDER 17s:
The Stallions may have been a lot higher on the competition ladder than their rivals but you wouldn't have guessed that the way the Wolves played on the day.

In the end it was a solitary goal from Jesse Kmcevic in the first half which separated the sides.

Wollongong to their credit never gave up and did have enough chances to not only level up but to also win this game.

But courtesy of a strong defence the Stallions held the Wolves at bay.

NEXT WEEKEND:
The Marconi Stallions are really cantering at present in both the Super Youth and Cadet League competitions, and two of their sides remain undefeated after Round 8 which augurs well for their next all-important local clash against the Fairfield Bulls at Nineveh Field this coming weekend.

Can the Bulls end the Stallions excellent run?

Time will tell...

Rushden and Diamonds win promotion

RUSHDEN and Diamonds won promotion to the English League without kicking a ball last week after Yeovil, their only rivals for promotion, lost 3-2 at home to Hereford.

Yeovil's defeat means that Rushden, based in Northamptonshire some 60 miles north of London, will play in the League for the first time next season after clinching the Football Conference title.

Rushden, managed by Brian Talbot -- a former FA Cup winner with both Ipswich Town and Arsenal, owe their unusual name to the merger in 1992 between former local arch-rivals Rushden Town and Irthlingborough Diamonds.

The club's impressive 9,000-seater Nene Stadium is based in Irthlingborough and the club are backed by Max Griggs, the producer of the Dr. Marten boot.

Vialli returns to management

ITALIAN Gianluca Vialli returned to English soccer management with first division Watford eight months after being sacked by Chelsea.

The 36-year-old Vialli, who will replace former England manager Graham Taylor at the end of the season, was fired by Chelsea in September after guiding the London premier league club to the Cup Winners' Cup, the FA Cup, the League Cup and the European Super Cup.

"My desire was to stay in England," Vialli told a news conference at Vicarage Road.

"It will be a great challenge but it will also be a very exciting time. Last but not least we are going to have fun."

Watford were relegated from the premier league 12 months ago and have fallen away badly after starting the season with a 15-game unbeaten run.

Vialli joined Chelsea in May 1996 following a glittering career with Sampdoria, Juventus and Italy, but he fell out with manager Ruud Gullit after being sidelined by a hamstring injury.

Vialli was regularly left out of the starting line-up but was then appointed as the club's player-manager in succession to Gullit in February 1998.

Success followed swiftly but the pressure began to mount last year when although Chelsea beat Aston Villa 1-0 in the FA Cup final, they finished fifth in the premier league and failed to qualify for the Champions League.

Following a 2-0 defeat by Bradford City in August, Chelsea had a bid for West Ham striker Paolo Di Canio turned down and Vialli's 2-1/2 year spell as manager ended with his dismissal on September 12.

He will succeed Taylor who announced last month that he intended to retire at the end of the season.

Vialli said he did not think he had a point to prove after being fired by Chelsea.

"I don't think so," he said.

"I'm not here to prove a point
but I'm just here to do a good job...we are here to bring the club back to the premiership hopefully sooner rather than later.

"This club belongs to the premiership.

"This is the club I want to take to the next level."

Watford chairman and rock singer Elton John welcomed Vialli's arrival.

"The appointment is one of the most stunning coups we have ever pulled off," he said.

"He's an incredible talent."

Coaches Kenny Jackett and Luther Blissett will leave the club and Vialli said he was considering the options for his backup staff.

Rangers appoint Wouters

GLASGOW Rangers manager Dick Advocaat has recruited former Ajax and Netherlands midfielder Jan Wouters to his coaching staff, following the club's disappointing season in the Scottish premier league.

The club announced on Wednesday that it had appointed Wouters, 42, who was previously coach at Ajax, as a first-team coach.

The move came just three days after Rangers lost 3-0 to Celtic to trail their Glasgow rivals -- who have already won the title and are on course for a domestic treble of trophies -- by an embarrassing 21 points in the league.

Advocaat, the former Dutch national coach, will remain in charge of team affairs at Ibrox but wanted to strengthen his coaching team to challenge Celtic next season.

Wouters played under Advocaat for the Netherlands, for whom he won 70 caps, at the 1994 World Cup Finals and was a member of the side which won the European Championship in 1988.

He played for Ajax, PSV Eindhoven and Bayern Munich before taking charge at the Amsterdam club as coach in 1999-2000 but was sacked in March 2000 because of poor results.

"Rangers is a huge club with a great European pedigree and a squad of talented players," he said.

"I am looking forward to coming and living in Scotland and working with the team at the magnificent new training facilities."

Farina realistic in face of strong Kiwi squad

SOCCEROO coach Frank Farina has warned that the New Zealand team standing between Australia and the World Cup finals looms as their best in two decades.

Farina has again been forced to play diplomat over the availability of overseas-based stars as he prepares to select his squad for the Confederations Cup starting in Korea on May 30 and there will be plenty of big names missing there.

That's a concession Farina says he is prepared to make to ensure the leading players are available for the two leg World Cup qualifier matches against the other Oceania group winner, which should be New Zealand.

"It is important to stress that we cannot presume we are going to get through our second lot of qualifiers," Farina said.

"Arguably for me this is the best New Zealand side they've had in 20 years," he said.

Nine of New Zealand's 20-man squad is currently playing overseas and 10 are currently playing in the Australian national league with only back-up keeper Ross Nicholson playing in New Zealand's national competition..

Eastern Pride defender Mark Atkinson, who was named in the All Whites' World Cup squad, said it was as strong a Kiwi squad as he'd seen and there would be a real battle for team places.

New Zealand, which like Australia was seeded in the Oceania qualifiers, drew a much tougher group than the Socceroos and while it should crush the Cook Islands and beat Vanuatu it won't have it all its own way against Tahiti and the Solomon Islands.

"We should get through, but while Australia is treating us with respect we must also give that same respect to Tahiti and Solomon Islands," Atkinson said.

"But there's always a chance for us when we play Australia," he said.

Farina said current media focus appeared to be on who would be available for the Confederations' Cup rather than the next hurdle on the road to the World Cup.

"Everyone seems to have forgotten our second round World Cup qualifiers at the end of June," Farina said.

"That's when it is important for all players to be available and while it would be nice to have everyone on board for the Confederations Cup some concessions will be made," he said.

"There are some players who will not be available later this month. Harry Kewell is awaiting the birth of his first child and Mark Viduka has had a particularly hectic season with Leeds United, and there are other players with personal commitments that I am aware of.

Most of the players involved in the romp through the World Cup qualifiers in Coffs Harbour can expect a call-up for the Confederations Cup.

"While I may be prepared to juggle a little bit for the time being we must dot the `i's and cross the `t's to take on New Zealand because if we stumble at the New Zealand hurdle we're gone for another four years.

"Everyone must be realistic about the games in June and there will come a time when I have to say to all of the players `Your country needs you, you have to come back'".

All-Whites squad for World Cup Group play-offs

NEW Zealand has named a squad of 20 players who will compete in the Oceania World Cup Qualifying Tournament to be held from the 4th to 13th June at North Harbour Stadium in Auckland.

The winner of that group will play Australia in a home and away series with the final winner representing Oceania in play-off against the 5th placed South American country for a final berth in the FIFA 2002 World Cup to be held in Japan and Korea.

Leeds United player Danny Hay has withdrawn because of injury after first being named in an original 32 player squad..

The Kiwis will play a match against Singapore on 22 May as part of their preparation.

Goalkeepers
Jason Batty (SCUNTHORPE UNITED)
Ross Nicholson (CENTRAL UNITED)
Defenders
Scott Smith (WOKING)
Sean Douglas (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Ivan Vicelich (RODA JC)
Ryan Nelsen (DC UNITED)
Chris Zoricich (NEWCASTLE)
Midfielders
Jonathan Perry (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Mark Atkinson (EASTERN PRIDE)
Simon Elliott (LOS ANGELES GALAXY)
Mark Burton (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Chris Jackson (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Arran Lines (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Gavin Wilkinson (KILKENNY)
Jeff Campbell (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Gerard Davis (FOOTBALL KINGZ)
Strikers
Kris Bouckenhooghe (SK ROESELARE)
Vaughan Coveny (SOUTH MELBOURNE)
Chris Killen (MANCHESTER CITY)
Paul Urlovic (FOOTBALL KINGZ)

The Draw for Oceania Group 2 World Cup qualifying matches (all matches to be played at Auckland):
June 4 - Vanuatu v Tahiti
June 4 - Solomon Island v Cook Islands
June 6 - Tahiti v New Zealand
June 6 - Cook Islands v Vanuatu
June 8 - Vanuatu v Solomon Islands
June 8 - New Zealand v Cook Islands
June 11 - Solomon Islands v New Zealand
June 11 - Cook Islands v Tahiti
June 13 - New Zealand v Vanuatu
June 13 - Tahiti v Solomon Islands

Archie wants to change the emphasis at Leichhardt

By Frank Risorto

FORMER Socceroo and APIA-Leichhardt player Archie Blue believes the emphasis on winning rather than how you win is hurting Australian football.

Blue, 61, who played in the national side on 10 occasions scoring four goals, is now youth technical director for the Leichhardt Tigers.

Blue is trying to install an attitude of good football and the development of young players becoming the first priority rather than results.

"I have been appointed to try and bring in new ideas and new coaching methods to try and produce players to come up through the grades," Blue said.

"I was appointed a few weeks into the season so all the players and coaches had already been appointed.

"My main aim is to try and exploit the background and overall strength in the club and in this district, there's a lot of potential at this club.

"I think it's a problem across the board in Australian football that we tend to bring through great younger players but they then drop off.

"What we want to do at Leichhardt is to bring players through the juniors and then try to get them to play right through the grades right up to the seniors.

"Other than leaving to go elsewhere to play we want them to stay unless we can help them go overseas or something to further their career.

"We really push for results rather than producing better players, even more so this year with the Youth League being reduced in teams from 20 to 12 all that matters is results and it's a real do or die season for many clubs including ourselves.

"At Leichhardt we want to try and produce the best young players and help them with every aspect of their game and give them every opportunity to learn every aspect of football."

Blue was a player when names such as Prague, Manfred Schafer, Bob Bignall and South Coast United meant something to many.

No doubt they still do mean a lot to many, but a lot of children around have, no idea of the history involved in their own clubs and Blue believes it's up to the club to be proud and promote their history.

"Most of our kids don't know about the great APIA sides of the past," he says.

"Our job is to make them aware of the past and history involved in our clubs.

"They aren't aware of some of the great sides we had and the crowds we played in front of and that the National Soccer League wasn't the beginning.

"There were State League games which would bring in 20 or 30 thousand people.

"And you had six or seven Australian internationals playing for one side, it was simply amazing."

QPR and Wimbledon stir merger horrors

QUEENS Park Rangers' owner Chris Wright has assured supporters he will not proceed with a merger with fellow London club Wimbledon against their wishes.

"It's just been the germ of an idea and it's been blown up out of all proportion," Wright said on radio in London last Friday.

"Two or three days ago, I personally decided that it's highly unlikely that it will grow from just a seed in the ground, so to say."

Wimbledon chairman Charles Koppel admitted the two clubs had discussed a possible merger but he also stressed that no agreement would be reached with consulting his club's supporters.

QPR went into administration last month and have been relegated to the second division while Wimbledon dropped out of the premier league last year after 14 years in the top division.

They also have no ground of their own and play at Selhurst Park, the home of Crystal Palace.

Wright's commitment was welcomed by the Queens Park Rangers Supporters Trust, QPR 1st.

"It is a clear unequivocal undertaking from Chris Wright based on the strength of feeling from fans," said spokeswoman Libby Magrill.

"We are very pleased that this merger will not be forced upon supporters.

"It was made clear to us that the club had fully intended to canvass the opinion of fans and then act."

None of the 92 clubs in the English league are the result of a modern-day merger.

But Koppel insisted that no agreement had yet been reached, as was reported in *The Sun* newspaper on Thursday.

"Clearly we are all upset about the story in *The Sun*," he said.

"I strongly believe and maintained throughout the discussions that an issue like this must be discussed with supporters before appearing in the media."

The Football League was scheduled to meet to discuss the possible merger, which could create problems by leaving division one a team short.

QPR's relegation could mean the new club would be dropped to division two.

A number of English clubs were formed by mergers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Sun said the new club would be managed by Wimbledon's Terry Burton and play at Loftus Road, QPR's current ground in west London.

The Sun report said QPR chairman Chris Wright had initially approached Wimbledon and the two clubs had been holding talks for months.

Wright announced he would step down as chairman of QPR in February after losing the support of the fans, and in early April the club went into administration after its Loftus Road holding company cancelled its stock market listing.

The administrators assured Rangers supporters at the time that the club was safe.

While the two clubs were unsure what to call the new team, QPR's Wright was fighting to make sure Wimbledon's name did not appear first, *The Sun* added.

A spokeswoman for the QPR supporters' club said they would fight a merger.

"Historically, QPR fans will not support a merger with any other Football League club," she said.

"Proposed mergers with Brentford in 1967 and Fulham in 1987 were successfully opposed by the fans, and any move to merge QPR with Wimbledon this year, or at any stage in the future, will be opposed by every possible means.

"QPR fans will fight to retain the identity of our club.

"We know that Wimbledon fans will do the same."

Not so long ago, it seemed as if there was a new club about to be formed on a daily basis.

Although the two clubs in question have never tried it on with each other before, it's hardly the first time either of them have entertained the idea of shedding their identity and jumping into bed with another club.

Almost exactly two years ago to the day, Wimbledon were in discussions with their Selhurst Park landlords Crystal Palace over a merger.

The idea only fell by the wayside because of strong fan opposition and the fact that Wimbledon were not prepared to give up the Premiership place they then held to join Palace in the First.

Wimbledon's efforts pale into insignificance however when compared with the Rangers. QPR nearly linked up with Brentford in 1967, before supporters got their act together and told the men in suits where to stick their super club.

But the same west London club were also major players in one of the most high-profile merger controversies of the '80s.

In 1987, David Bulstrode, chairman of Fulham and commercial developers Marler, bought Loftus Road. Bulstrode had earmarked Craven Cottage for lucrative housing and needed somewhere to dump the then-struggling residents, so he mooted the idea of Fulham Park Rangers.

"Bulldozer" Bulstrode's plan was only derailed by the frenzied efforts of fans, local councillors and, eventually, the Football League.

There was one other big merger story that decade, and it can be summed up in two fat words: Robert Maxwell.

The sweaty swindler took control of Oxford in the early '80s and soon announced plans to merge the club with Reading.

Neither set of fans thought much of the rotund idiot's scheme, and successfully took to the streets to put a stop to it.

Much the same thing happened a few years later in Edinburgh, when Hearts chairman Wallace "Merger" Mercer tried to swallow up Hibs to form Edinburgh United.

Sense again prevailed, although only because Kwik-Fit chairman Tom Farmer saved the Hibees at the last minute by saving the struggling Easter Road club from receivership.

Dundee and Sheffield are just two other cities whose residents have given the big two fingers to merger plans: Dundee, Dundee United and the Sheffields, Wednesday and United all live to fight another day and other half-baked schemes.

So the message is: if you don't want a super club, then take to the streets.

Just as long as it's not Oxford St.

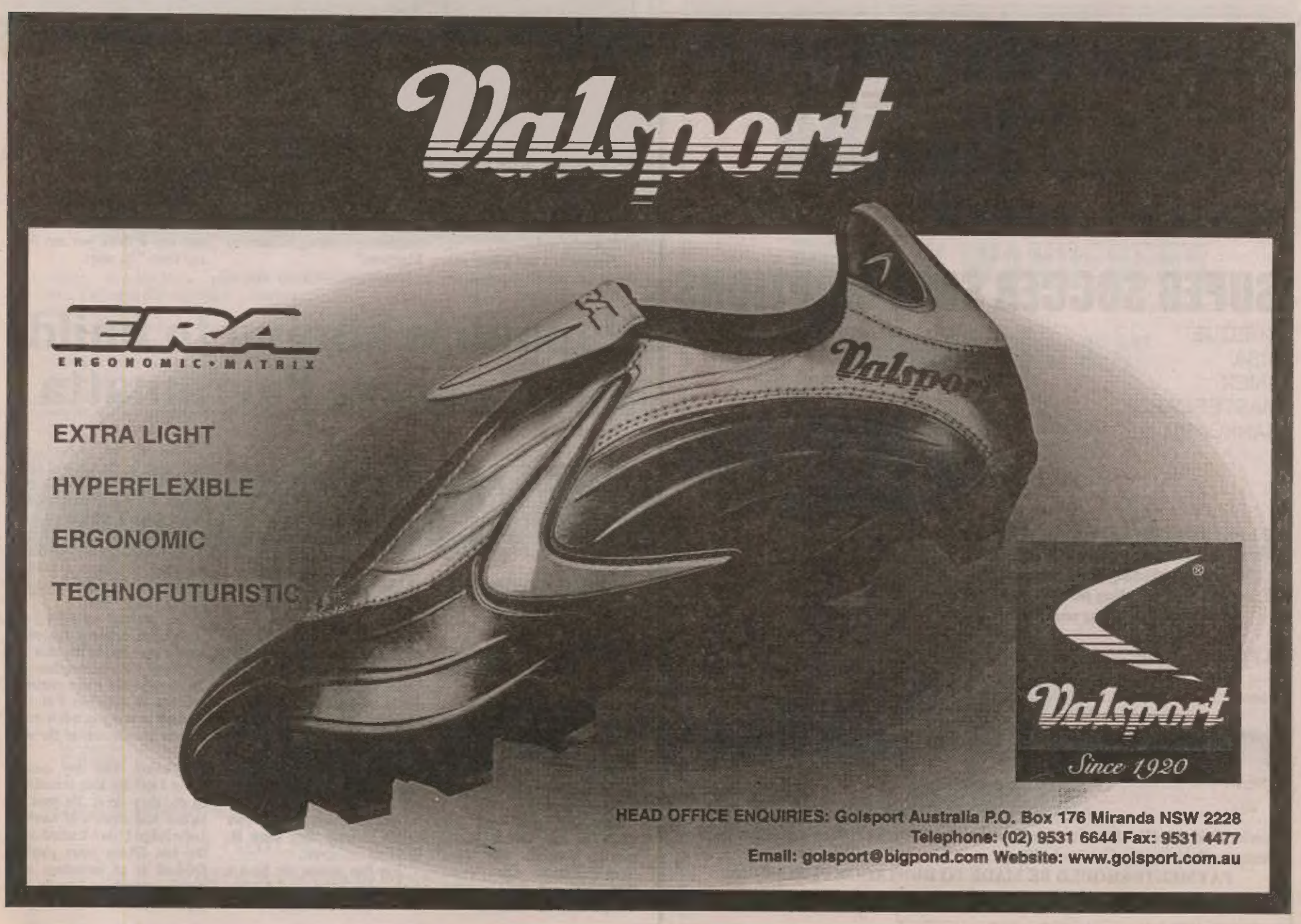
There has, however, been one successful merger, of sorts.

Highland League clubs Inverness Caledonian and Inverness Thistle merged in the early '90s to become Inverness Caledonian Thistle, joined the Scottish League, and are now one of the strongest teams in the Scottish First Division.

Even then, there were serious downsides.

Although overall crowds are up, many stalwart supporters have left in disillusionment, never to return to the clubs they've followed for years.

And you've got to feel for fans of Inverness's third club, Clachnacuddin, who declined to join the merged club and remain three divisions below their rivals, peering up.



Leeds made us suffer: Cuper

VALENCIA coach Hector Cuper last week held up his hands and admitted: "Leeds United made us suffer. They are a class act."

United were smarting after failing to open up an advantage over the Spaniards in the Champions League semi-final first leg at Elland Road last night, but there is everything to play for in this week's return.

Cuper, one of Europe's most respected coaches, accepts that the job is far from over despite having kept a clean sheet away from home.

He expects a different game on Tuesday and said: "I do not expect Leeds to come at us in the same way they did here and that should allow us a bit more freedom.

"But the tie is delicately balanced.

"Our hands were full in trying to deal with Smith, Viduka and Kewell."

United boss David O'Leary was satisfied with the night's work in matching last season's beaten finalists and said: "You'd have liked to have scored a couple of goals, but we were playing a very good side.

"They have good players within a good system.

"You'd love to be able to change things around, but we can't.

"For instance with Robbie Keane suspended we have only two forwards.

"I'm not at all downhearted about our prospects of reaching the final because on our day we can always score an away goal.

"I'm a great believer in fate.

"God is good in many ways and who knows, we may be in for a great night in Valencia.

"But you'd love to be going to Valencia with a lead.

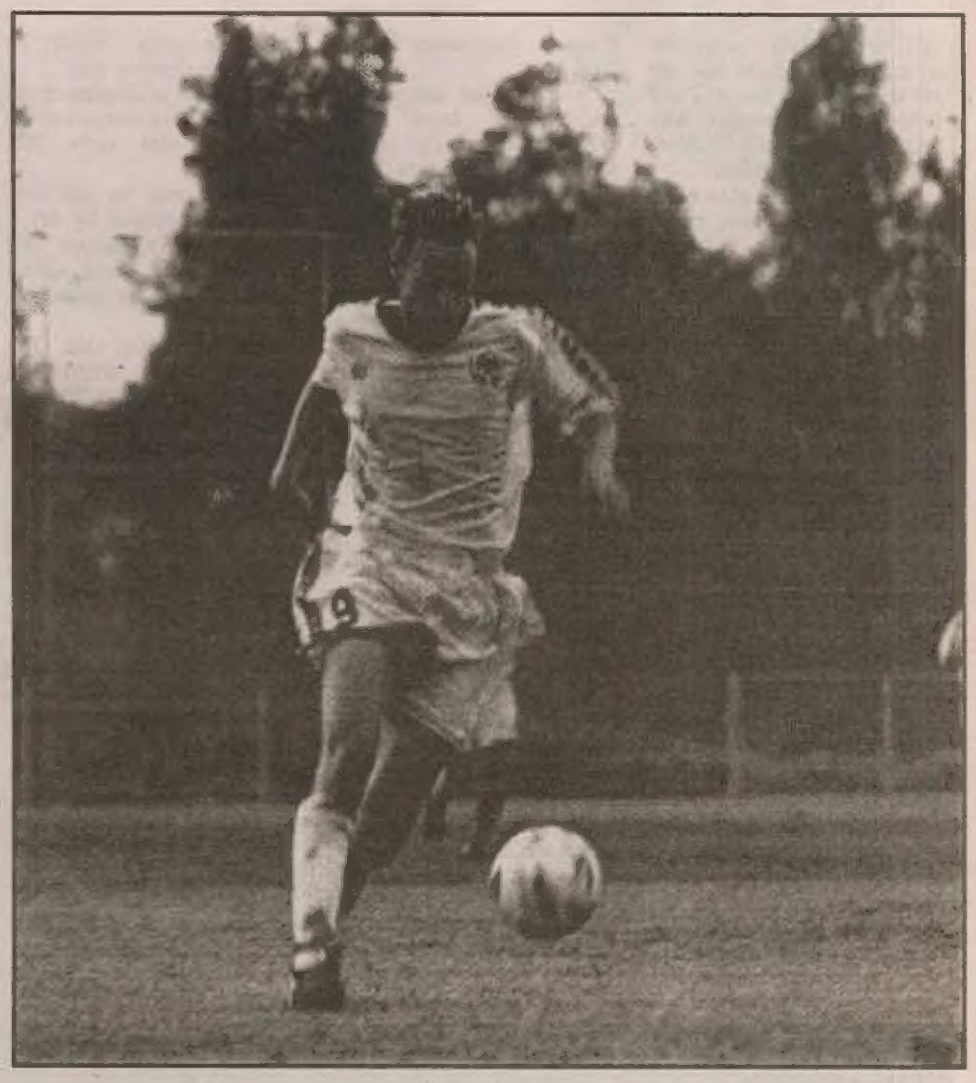
"At the end of the day I don't think this tie is over.

"We're 90 minutes away from the European Cup final and we have a chance with our ability to score goals.

"We didn't really get the rub of the green and what a difference it would be to be going there with a one-goal advantage."

Hoenselaars says Bulls can beat anyone

By Frank Risorto



FAIRFIELD Bulls striker Marc Anthony Hoenselaars is confident the Bulls can go all the way and win the Super League Championship.

"We are very strong and I believe we can beat anyone," Hoenselaars says.

"Everybody at the club gets behind you and the fans are really good and we have a real strong squad. "

Before last weekend Fairfield were sitting in sixth spot on the Super League table, having won two, drawn two and lost two but Hoenselaars sees no reason to panic.

"So far we have played quite well, we got a slow start but have been improving each week," says Hoenselaars.

"The members of the committee have put a lot of effort into the club and are attracting players and now we have to reward them with a Championship."

Paired up front again with long time partner Matthew Borg, Hoenselaars believes the reason behind his good start to the season has a lot to do with their mutual understanding.

The 25-year-old has scored five goals in six games.

"We do play well together because we know what each other is going to do," Hoenselaars said.

"We have played together for about three years now so we have a fairly good idea of what's going to happen.

"But all the players are getting better each week in terms of fitness as well.

"Personally I had a long season at Leichhardt Tigers in the Premier League and after a few weeks now I feel I'm getting back to my best.

"But the same probably goes with a lot of teams so the competition will improve as a whole."

"I'm just be happy if I keep getting the chances and putting away the opportunities that the midfield is creating for me and Matthew."

Hoenselaars is pretty sure of the Bulls chances this season and has impressed with many of the sides and players he has already come across this season and believes there's only one side that they will meet in the Grand Final.

"Dulwich Hill when we played them earlier in the year were quite impressive, but on our day I think we can beat any team," he adds.

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Papoulias aiming to build awareness at Parramatta

By Frank Risorto

PARRAMATTA CITY Coach Andy Papoulias is happy with his side who are currently sitting on the top of the Second Division table but believes his they can improve.

"We have a lot of opportunities to improve as a side and to play better, of course," said Papoulias.

"Our aim for this season is to get promoted from Division One.

"We are doing well so far in the season but we will have a down period, nothing ever goes smooth in football.

"I just want the players to get better and perform to their best each week."

Papoulias, spent over five years in the United States playing football with New York Cosmos, Las Vegas Americans and more recently Tampa Bay Rowdies as well as playing for seven years in Greek First Division with Panathanaikos.

Parramatta City were promoted from the Third Division last season and Papoulias believes the club has the potential to go to the Super League.

"That's what we are working for in the long run," says Papoulias.

"We want to establish the club and build more support and make the people more aware of the club.

"That would be a great financial boost for the club and help attract more players to the club.

"Last year was difficult because we had a lot of young players.

"And they were hard to work with because they were always up and down.

"But this season we have a more settled line up and a few more experienced players.

"And we are probably the only club in the Second Division to have an international player in the team in Ali Samir from the Fiji Olympic side playing for us.

"I was told by the Fiji coach to come and have a look at him play and he is a very good player.

"But our main strength is the connection between the players we have had at the club.

"There's more discipline and the players are more committed but if possible I'm still looking to bring in a few more players for the rest of the season."

"I enjoy, like any coach, when I tell my side something to do, they do it. To pass on tactics and aspects of football knowledge I have learned over the last fifteen years playing football is an advantage and that is something I really enjoy."

ALL THE NSL CHAMPIONSHIP ACTION ....

Kresimir Marusic: one of the best imports

By Frank Risorto

IN THE 1996/97 season Kresimir Marusic could do no wrong.

Playing for Sydney United under Branko Culina, Marusic was the best player in the league, hands down.

And with Ante Milicic and David Zdrilic scoring goals for fun the team was on a high.

The side went on a nine match winning streak, still a club record to this day

Marusic, who was brought to Australia originally by the Melbourne Knights, has become arguably one of the best imports to play in the National Soccer League.

Talk to Marusic about that season and it's all smiles.

"Well, it was a great season, simple as that," Marusic said.

"For myself and for the club we all played superb that year and everything seemed to go well.

"We finished about eight or nine points in front of Brisbane, in the process breaking the scoring record at the time, something like 67 goals.

"Zdrilic ended up scoring 21 goals and Milicic got 18."

While Marusic was one of the favourites for the Warren Medal he believed he had no chance to win.

He was nominated with fellow United players and Ante Milicic and David Zdrilic, Paul Trimboli and Troy Halpin.

"They all had good seasons and I didn't think I had played as good as them," Marusic says

"Everybody on the night was saying I was going to win but I had no idea.

"But it was a great privilege to win the Warren Medal and I hold that a very high honour to be classed as the best player in the league.

"I still hold that award in very high regard and am proud to be on the list.

"On the night I was still very nervous and when they announced me as the winner, I didn't know what to do.

"My English was as good as it is now and I didn't know what to say.

"I remember waiting for about two hours before they read out the winner and it just made me even worse.

"I got up and just said 'Thank you to my players and to everyone' of course if I won now I could say a lot more."

Marusic is again playing under Branko Culina in the NSL with Sydney Olympic and would be a good judge as to who he thinks will win this year's Warren Medal.

"It's really hard to pick a winner this year," he says.

"Do you go with a player doing good in a struggling side or a great player in a top team who gets little attention?

"For me the standout players this season have been Damian Mori, Bobby Despotovski, Con Boutsianis and Scott Chipperfield.

"Despotovski and Mori will always score goals but Chipperfield and Boutsianis have been the best two players all season I think.

"Plus Chipperfield along with Boutsianis has help set up so many goals, but I can't separate them two."

But it wasn't all smiles for Sydney United that year for Marusic that season.

Playing a Grand Final in Brisbane in front of a then record crowd of 40,446, it was the perfect stage for Marusic to weave his magic.

But it didn't go to plan and Sydney United lost 2-0 to Brisbane Strikers.

"It was a very disappointing day," Marusic says.

"They had just played Rugby League there a few days earlier and the pitch was terrible and their were lines everywhere on the field.

"But even if the field was great we still got beat by the better team.

"If it's a special occasion though, you would think they would have prepared especially for the Grand Final.

"But they were a bit of a bogey side for us that year because we ended up playing them three or four times and every time it was a different score.

"We were great at home and one game we beat them 3-0 then we played them another week later we lost to them 4-0.

"But going to the field and playing that in that sort of atmosphere was unbelievable and then you realised where you are and it was more special

"If it was a Sydney Grand Final though I know we would have won.

"But that Grand Final was a good example of showing no matter who you play and how you have been playing, it's always on the day."

KRESIMIR MARUSIC FACTFILE

Born: 29 November 1969, Croatia
Position: Midfielder
Current Club: Sydney Olympic
Previous NSL Clubs: Melbourne Knights, Sydney United, Carlton, Northern Spirit.
Honours:

1996/97	Warren Medal
1994/95	NSL Champion (Melbourne Knights)
	NSL Premier (Melbourne Knights)
1996/97	NSL Premier (Melbourne Knights)
	Grand Finalist (Sydney United)
1997/98	Grand Finalist (Carlton)

THE WARREN MEDAL INTERVIEWS
No 1: Kresimir Marusic

The coveted Warren Medal is named in honour of Johnny Warren, former St George star midfielder, Socceroo captain and an icon in the modern Australian game.
He is remembered by older fans for his sharp passing, ability to hold the ball up and terrier-like tenacity.
The Warren Medal is awarded to Australia's NSL Player of the Year and in this exclusive series *SuperSoccer* interviews all of the past winners.

YEAR	PLAYER OF THE YEAR
1977	Jimmy Rooney (Marconi Fairfield)
1978	Ken Boden (Newcastle KB United)
1979	Ivo Prskalo (Marconi Fairfield)
1980	Jimmy Hermiston (Brisbane Lions)
1981	Bobby Russell (Adelaide City)
1982	Peter Katholos (Sydney Olympic)
1983	Joe Watson (Sydney City)
1984	Sergio Melta (Adelaide City)
1985	Graham Honeyman (West Adelaide)
1986	Bobby Russell (South Melbourne)
	Graham Arnold* (Sydney Croatia)
1987	Andrew Zinni (Brunswick)
	Frank Farina* (Marconi Fairfield)
1988	Paul Wade (South Melbourne)
	Frank Farina* (Marconi Fairfield)
1989	Zlatko Nastevski (Marconi Fairfield)
89/90	Zeljko Adzic (MK)
90/91	Milan Ivanovic (Adelaide City)
91/92	Josip Biskic (Melbourne Croatia)
92/93	Paul Trimboli (South Melbourne)
93/94	Mark Viduka (Melbourne CSC)
94/95	Mark Viduka (Melbourne Knights)
95/96	Damian Mori (Adelaide City)
96/97	Kresimir Marusic (Sydney United)
97/98	
98/99	
99/00	Scott Chipperfield (Wollongong Wolves)

* The Player of the Year award was voted by the media until 1988. In 1986 a players' award was instituted and after 1988 it replaced the media award as the only award presented at the NSL Awards Night. Currently the Player of the Year is awarded the Warren Medal.

Chipperfield sets his goals on another Championship success

By Frank Risorto

IF THERE was ever a time for Scott Chipperfield to hit the right form it would be now, in the NSL's Championship Se-

He has done just that along with Con Boutsianis, arguably the best two players in this year's National Soccer League.

One pleasure for Chipperfield is his goal scoring form going into the NSL Finals and in particular the Adelaide City game where Wollongong knew only goals and more goals would get them into second spot on the table.

Wollongong won 6-2 and Chipperfield scored four in the process.

But Chipperfield says the players didn't know the Perth Glory score until full time.

"We were told Perth were winning by one goal at half time, I think to give us a bit of extra motivation," Chipperfield says.

"We should have scored a few more and we were on a roll from our performance against Northern Spirit, so we were in good form.

"But that victory against Adelaide City has put us in a good position to do well and gave us that second spot."

With Chipperfield and several other Wollongong players coming off contract at the end of this season, many NSL coaches would have taken note of his form and are ready to swoop on the Socceroo.

"I still would like to go overseas if possible," Chipperfield said.

"In July I have a few trials at clubs in France, Holland and Belgium so hopefully something will work out.

"I wanted to go to England but I am ineligible for a work visa.

"Maybe if I get picked for the Confederations Cup I might be eligible for a visa because I have played enough games for my country.

"Already a few NSL clubs have been in contact with me but for now I want to concentrate on winning another Championship with Wollongong.

"And at the end of the season I'll then look at my options and make the right decision

After winning the Warren Medal in 1999/00 season he would have to be one of the favourites to take out the medal again this year.

But Chipperfield is playing down his chances of a second medal rather concentrating on the Wollongong cause.

"I probably could be a good chance because I think I have played better this year than last year," he says.

"I scored 17 goals in 22 games so I think I have done quite well and I'm more of a complete player.

"My defence has improved and I'm taking the right option a lot more this season."

That is something that all Wollongong fans will agree with.

NEXT WEEK: SERGIO MELTA

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE
TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES
2000~2001

The versatile Wolf who is waiting to finish off Trimboli and Co.

By Frank Risorto

WOLLONONG defender Alvin Ceccoli believes this year's side is better than the last year's Wolves who won the Grand Final.

"We are more balanced all over the field and are one of the favourites to win this year," Ceccoli said.

"Last year we just went in to the Finals and a lot of people expected us to get knocked out straight away.

"But even if we don't win, we did well to win the Oceania Championship and to make the Finals was a bonus.

"We had an aim at the start of the season to win the Oceania Championship and to finish in the Finals, and we have achieved both.

"But in the Finals it's always a lottery and many factors could contribute to your success or down fall, it's all down to who gets their fare share of luck."

The 27-year-old played in last year's successful Grand Final side and was a major factor in this season's team finishing in the top two.

Although Ceccoli has spent the majority of his time at Wollongong playing as a left fullback this season he has played as a central defender.

Earlier in the season when the Wolves were short on the left side of midfield, coach Ron Corry had no hesitation in moving the Ceccoli further up the field.

After playing several games Ceccoli was very impressive and drew praise for his performances in midfield bringing a new dimension to the Wolves style of play.

With Wollongong playing South Melbourne in this Friday's Major Semi Final Ceccoli is fully aware of the dangers that Trimboli and Co. posses—especially playing the first game at home before having to travel to Melbourne to finish the job off.

"Any side in the Top Six are a threat and in the Finals it's a completely new ball game," Ceccoli says.

"Perth and Sydney Olympic are also a danger, the only difference is that we have got a second chance.

"It will be difficult for Knights or Marconi to win.

"I think only Sydney Olympic won from fifth place one year, but it would be difficult to do again.

"We have performed well at home and away this season.

"But we are obviously more comfortable at home and we want to try and get a result in the first game.

"We don't want to be going to Melbourne having to chase the game and come from behind and a first leg gives us the option to how we are going to play in the second leg.

"Are we going to attack and chase a result or are we going to try and hold the result after leading in the first leg.

"Like I said before, it's all a bit of a lottery and it depends if you have luck on your side."

One subject that Ceccoli takes no pleasure in discussing is the constant problem of Wollongong's leaky defence.

"We have copped a lot of flak from some people and parts of the media about problems we have defending," he says.

"But in all of the big games we have done well.

"It seems to be against the lesser sides that we seem to concede a goal."

Ceccoli has a valid point and if you look back at their games, the majority of goals come from sides outside the Top Six.

Three against Canberra, three against Kingz and four against Newcastle show Ceccoli has a valid point.

"As long as we keep creating chances for our strikers then they will continue to keep scoring," Ceccoli said.

"And we will keep rising to the occasion."

Ceccoli is now playing in his third Finals series with Wollongong and can't help but be excited at the thought.

"It's great to play in the Finals because all the stakes are a lot higher," Ceccoli said.

"The standard seems to rise and the play gets a little faster, more tackles fly in and there are more tactics to be played out.

"The crowds pick up and the atmosphere at games gets better and they get more into the game.

"And you can of course win another Championship and that's what you play football for."

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE
TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES
2000-2001

NSL TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP
ACTION AT ITS BEST ....
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Underdog Culina hits back at the media

LAST week it hit the fan at Finals contender Sydney Olympic when star midfielder Troy Halpin was reported as having walked out on the club.

Halpin was said to be planning to leave the club and heading over to Germany for trials, ruling him out of the National Soccer League Finals after a fall-out with coach Branko Culina.

But the Sydney Olympic coach said late in the week that he knew nothing of troubled midfielder Troy Halpin's plan to head to Germany.

"It's news to me and the club's owners," Culina said.

It was also suggested to Culina at the Thursday media conference to promote the first leg of the NSL Finals match against Marconi at Belmore he'd also had a dust-up with the player.

"I've had lots of blow-ups with lots of players – that's me," Culina said.

"The Halpin thing is media fuelled.

"He is known to have a short fuse but on his day he's still the best midfielder in the country."

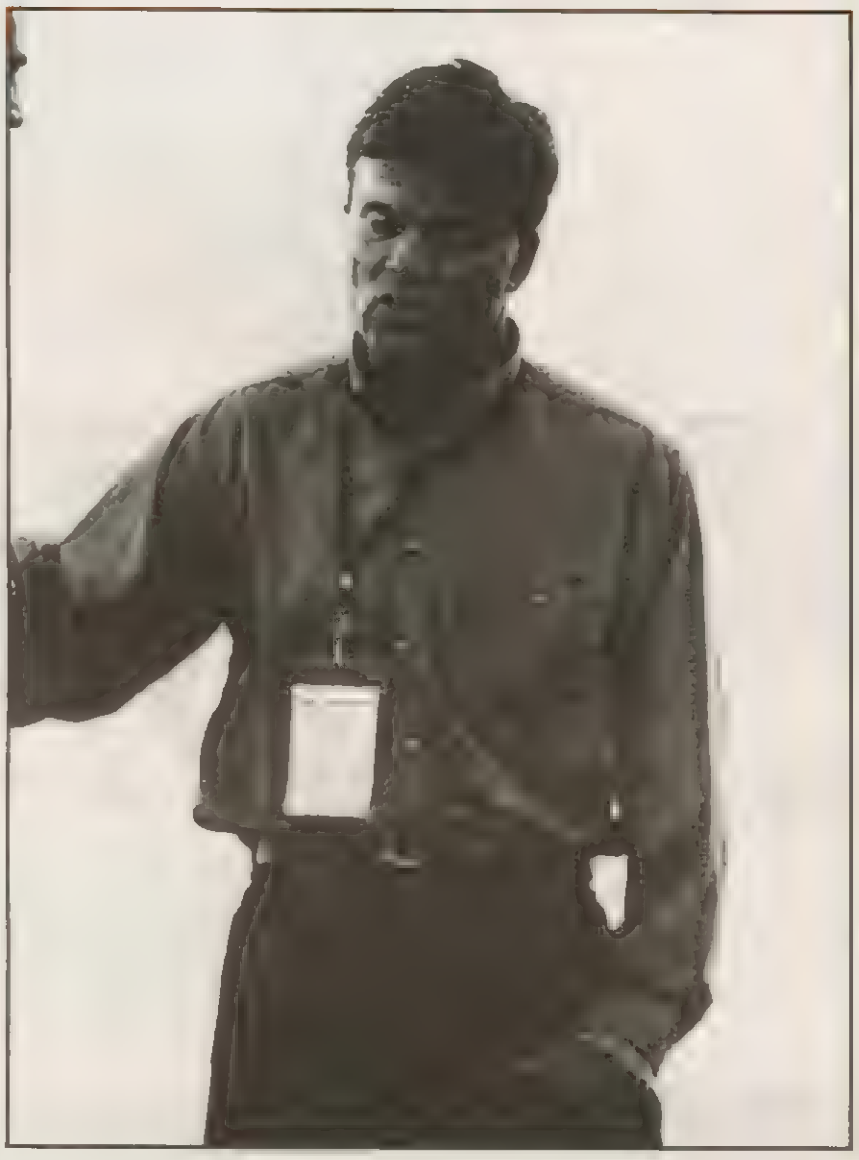
Soccer Australia technical director Les Scheinflug saw Halpin play his last game for Olympic against South Melbourne three weeks ago and described his performance as "absolutely brilliant".

"Troy came to training yesterday (Wednesday) but didn't work out with the other players," Culina said.

Culina has come in for his share of criticism by choosing to play the first match at home.

"I know my players and the fans. I feel we can get the runs on the board first and take it from there," he said.

After losing dynamic wingback Lindsay Wilson for the Finals and with Greg Owens only available for two games, the odds of Olympic progressing past the second knockout stage have surely blown.



"We've done superbly well this year, I'm proud of the players and what they've achieved," Culina added of his team, already written off as serious Championship hope.

"I think all of you so called experts predicted we'd struggle this year.

"But we're there and in fact we've done better than last year. People have been pretty quick to kick us but one thing Olympic has this year that we probably didn't have in the past is the ability to bounce back and I have no doubt we'll do it again in the finals.

"We'll progress through because we are a better team overall (than Marconi).

"If you look at the results overall and position on the table it would only be logical that we'd go through."

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE
TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES
2000 - 2001

We'll go down in history as failures, says Matic

By Sam Lienert

ADELAIDE City Force coach Zoran Matic has said his young squad would go down in history for ending the club's record run of 11 consecutive National Soccer League finals berths.

"It's the first time in a long time but we haven't done it and we will always be remembered as the generation that didn't make it," Matic told *SuperSoccer*.

Matic said he and his side were suffering after the seventh-placed finish but would not use the excuse of youth and inexperience.

The Force lost experienced stars Damian Mori, Alex Tobin and Angelo Costanzo to other clubs before the season, and had skipper Aurelio Vidmar and striker Claudio Pelosi sidelined by injury for many early matches.

Matic said despite relying on a large proportion of teenagers to carry the side and defying most pre-season predictions to finish seventh, the season should be branded a failure.

"You don't go into the competition if you don't think you will make it," he said.

"Anybody that plays in the Adelaide City strip has to always aim for the top results, anything other than winning the league is not a good result."

Matic was particularly unhappy with City's results at home late in the season, when the team had seven matches at home without a win from round 15 to 27.

And he said the Force needed to recruit two experienced defenders and a quality midfielder to return to the Finals next season.

"We need two players definitely in the last line, that's important, we used to always have the best (last line), now we have nearly the worst," he said.

Matic said a lot of his young players had improved throughout the year, but he said it was not certain the existing squad would continue to improve next season.

"Some of them that played their first year, their enthusiasm was huge and they gave their best," he said.

"If they don't have any room left for improvement they'll go backwards next year, but some will step up."

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SUPER SOCCER'S NSL CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

Harnwell off as Glory hold out

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 0
PERTH GLORY 0

Despite being reduced to 10 men, Perth Glory have held on to earn a nil-all draw against Melbourne Knights in the first leg of their Elimination Final at Knights Stadium.

Jamie Harnwell was sent off on the half hour after receiving his second yellow card and the best attacking side in the league was forced into retreat.

Adrian Cervinski drilled a shot into a crowded penalty area just before the break but Scott Miller was on the line to boot it clear.

The Knights pressed forward after the change and the Glory packed its penalty box - the orders from coach Bernd Stange were to come home with a result and not concede a goal.

Skipper-coach Andrew Marth then latched onto a pinpoint Alex Kiratzoglou cross and stabbed it goalbound but Jason Petkovic had covered ground and blocked from point-blank range.

Marth also headed narrowly over but the packed Perth backline held out for the result Stange had wanted.

The game was briefly interrupted as fans set off fireworks and hurled flares onto the ground.

This distraction was only a sign of things to come, with serious crowd violence after the match putting the Knights' place in the competition in doubt.

Marth ironically said after the game that it was time the club weeded out the troublemakers on the terraces and that was before the Glory team was attacked on its way to the bus.

There had been bad blood between the sides before this game with Bobby Despotovski accused of racially taunting African utility Ransford Banini in their earlier encounter.

The teams will meet in the second leg on Saturday night at Subiaco Oval.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE
TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP
SERIES 2000~2001

Melbourne Knights 0 Perth Glory 0
Venue:Knights Stadium Referee: Con Diomis Crowd:5,380
Cautions: S Ognenovski 08' (MK) L Lapsansky 16' (MK) G Naven 09' (PG) J Harnwell 12' (PG) L Milicevic 26' (PG) A Edwards 37' (PG)
D Mori 50' (PG) Red Cards: J Harnwell 28' (PG)
Melbourne Knights:20 Lupce Acevski (gk) 2 Daniel Vasilevski 3 Rodrigo Vargas 4 Sasa Ognenovski 6 Joey Rajher (-46') 9 Joel Porter 22 Antonio Da Costa 23 Steve Horvat 25 Adrian Cervinski 26 Andrew Marth 28 Lubo Lapsansky Substitutes:5 Jason Vukadin 16 Alex Kiratzoglou (+46') 19 Anthony Pelikan 27 Ivan Jolic 1 Martin John (gk)
Perth Glory:1 Jason Petkovic (gk) 3 Jamie Harnwell 4 Ljubo Milicevic 6 Gareth Naven 7 Scott Miller 9 Alistair Edwards (-63') 10 Bobby Despotovski 11 Kasey Wehrman 15 Edgar Aldrighi Junior 16 Damian Mori 23 Craig Deans

JAMIE HARNWELL: sent off

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SUPER SOCCER'S NSL CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT

Olympic superb, but Gibson goal gives hope

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 3
MARCONI STALLIONS 1

SYDNEY Olympic is a firm favourite to advance to the second round of the NSL finals after a solid 3-1 win over Marconi, in the first leg of their Elimination Final at Belmore Sports Ground on Sunday.

With both sides considered to be making up the numbers against the likes of South Melbourne, Wollongong and Perth, the home side showed it cannot be ruled out of contention with a performance coach Branko Culina described as one of the best of the season.

The Stallions kept their hopes alive with a 90th minute goal but their impotent attack will do well to score more than once in the return leg at Marconi Stadium on Sunday.

A clearly fired up Olympic side started with purpose and it took just three minutes for the home side to get its first reward.

Skipper Ante Juric created some space before Andrew Packer launched a cross for midfielder Pablo Cardozo to slam home.

Sydney Olympic's early glut of possession continued to frustrate the Stallions with James Afkos earning a yellow card in the 11th minute.

Olympic's Troy Halpin, who passed a late fitness test to play, showed Marconi what real midfield service was about, consistently providing probing crosses for his strikers.

But it was Kresimir Marusic who took full credit for Olympic's second goal after a beautiful free kick after 30 minutes.

Olympic was unlucky not to be further in front by halftime but a 59th minute goal from Cardozo put the match beyond doubt.

Marconi lifted its game in the final few minutes and eventually scored through John Gibson minutes before fulltime.

After the match Culina said Marconi's late goal was disappointing but he was delighted with his team's overall performance.

"I thought we played some of the best football we have all season and we will probably a bit unlucky not to score a few more," Culina said.

Culina also mockingly admitted to another confrontation" with chief destroyer Halpin, after media reports suggested the two were at odds last week.

"He's an outstanding player and we had a bit of a blow-up before the game and it just spurred him on to play a little bit better. We do this daily," Culina said dryly.

Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic will welcome back Socceroo striker Archie Thompson for the return leg and says his much maligned side at least has something to shoot for.

"A late goal probably gave us a little bit of hope. I would have said at 3-0 it would be very hard to come back," Krncevic said.

Sydney Olympic 3 (P Cardozo 03'/59' K Marusic 30')
Marconi Stallions 1 (J Gibson 89')
Venue: Belmore Sports Ground Referee: Mark Shield Crowd: 5,154
Cautions: K Marusic 36' (SO) J Afkos 11' (MS)
Sydney Olympic: 1 Clint Bolton (gk) 4 Paul Kohler 5 Scott Baillie 6 Ante Juric 7 Kresimir Marusic (-88') 10 Troy Halpin 11 George Goutzioulis 14 Greg Owens 17 Elias Augerinos (-75') 18 Pablo Cardozo 23 Andrew Packer (-77') Substitutes: 13 Damon Collina (+75') 15 Dylan MacAllister (+88') 22 Peter Zorbas (+77') 26 Anthony Doumanis 20 John Karoubas (gk)
Marconi Stallions: 1 David Aceski (gk) 3 Mark Babic 4 Angelo Costanzo 5 Dominic Longo 7 James Afkos 9 Norman Tome (-78') 10 John Maisano (-46') 17 John Gibson 19 Brendan Renaud 22 Kris Trajanovski (-61') 27 Grant Last Substitutes: 12 Saso Radulovic (+78') 15 Royce Brownlie (+61') 23 Vlado Zoric (+46') 26 Todd Brodie 20 Michael Turnbull (gk)

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WINTER SUPER LEAGUE (1ST, U21, U18)

Sat 12-May	Lynwood Park	7:00PM	5:00PM	3:00PM	Macarthur Rams	v	Manly Warringah
Sun 13-May	Jensen Park	6:00PM	4:00PM	2:00PM	Bankstown City Lions	v	Hurstville City Minotaurs
Sun 13-May	Nineveh Field	3:00PM	1:00PM	11:00AM	Fairfield Bulls	v	Stanmore Hawks
Sun 13-May	Arlington Oval	3:00PM	1:00PM	11:00AM	Dulwich Hill	v	Hajduk Wanderers
Sun 13-May	Rockdale Ilinden Sports Gd	3:00PM	1:00PM	11:00AM	Rockdale City Suns	v	AC United
Sun 13-May	Hammondville Oval	3:00PM	1:00PM	11:00AM	M.S.C Liverpool	v	Fraser Park Jets

DIVISION ONE (1ST, U21, U18)

Sat 12-May	Fred Caterson Reserve	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Hills United	v	Mt Druitt Town Rangers
Sat 12-May	Alec Lamberton	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Bathurst '75	v	Auburn United
Sun 13-May	Blick Oval	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Belmore Hercules	v	White City
Sun 13-May	University Oval No 1	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Sydney University	v	Illawarra Lions
Sun 13-May	Magdala Road Park	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Ryde City	v	Hurstville ZSC
Sun 13-May	Cook Park Mt Pritchard	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Mt Pritchard	v	Greystanes

DIVISION TWO (1ST, U21, U18)

Sat 12-May	Parkes Reserve	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	The Wanderers	v	Nepean Association
Sat 12-May	Birchgrove Oval	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Balmain	v	Parramatta City
Sun 13-May	ES Marks Field	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Hakoah	v	Western Sydney Lions
Sun 13-May	Mingara Club	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Central Coast Lakers	v	Concord FC
Sun 13-May	David Phillips Field	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	University of NSW	v	Camden Tigers
Sun 13-May	Pratten Park	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	Petersham Sydney District	v	Western Rage

DIVISION THREE (1ST, RESERVES)

					(Bye)		Prospect United
Sat 12-May	Richmond Park	7:00 PM	5:00 PM		Hawkesbury City	v	Trasandinos
Sat 12-May	Knight Park 3	3:00 PM	1:00 PM		Granville Greenisland	v	Liverpool City
Sun 13-May	Camdenville Oval	3:00 PM	1:00 PM		Sydney Crescent Star	v	Kellyville Kolts
Sun 13-May	Bearnen Park	3:00 PM	1:00 PM		United Eagles	v	Colo Colo
Sun 13-May	Summerhayes Park	3:00 PM	1:00 PM		Springwood	v	Auburn Star

DIVISION FOUR (1ST, RESERVES)

Sat 12-May	Westminster Park	3.00 pm	1.00 pm		Gladesville United	v	Sporting SCC
Sun 13-May	Fogolar Field	3.00 pm	1.00 pm		Western Sydney Passion	v	Schofields Scorpions
Sun 13-May	Knight Park 1	3.00 pm	1.00 pm		Fairfield City	v	UTS
Sun 13-May	Chopin Park	3.00 pm	1.00 pm		Kosciusko	v	Bossy
Sun 13-May	Lithgow Greyhound Park	3.00 pm	1.00 pm		Lithgow Workmen	v	Inter Lions
					(Bye)	v	Liverpool Olympic

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE (1ST, U21)

Sun 13-May	Seymour Shaw	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Sutherland Sharks	v	Central Coast Lakers
Sun 13-May	Hajduk Stadium	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Hajduk Wanderers	v	North West Sydney Koalas
Sat 12-May	Cromer Park	7.00 pm	5.00 pm	Manly Warringah Dolphins	v	NSW Academy
Sun 13-May	Jack McLaughlin Oval	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	NNSW Academy	v	Marconi
Sun 13-May	Cook Park St Marys	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Nepean Association	v	Wollongong Wolves

WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE (1ST, U19)

Sun 13-May	UTS Campus Lindfield	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	UTS	v	Bathurst City Panthers
Sun 13-May	Pluim Park	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Coasties	v	St George Association
				Roselands Raptors	v	(Bye)
Sun 13-May	Flockhart Park	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Petersham Sydney District	v	The Ravens
Sun 13-May	Lynwood Park	4.00 pm	2.00 pm	Macarthur Rams	v	Granville Association
Sun 13-May	Ron Routley Oval	3.00 pm	1.00 pm	Inter Lions/CSI	v	UWS W Campbelltown

GIRL'S YOUTH LEAGUE (U16, U14)

Fri 11-May	St Ives Show Ground	8.15pm	7.00pm	Ku-Ring-Gai	v	Blacktown
				Bye		Marconi
Sun 13-May	Pluim Park	11.15am	10.00am	Central Coast Coasties	v	Nepean
				Hajduk Wanderers		Bye
Sun 13-May	Bates Drive	11.15am	10.00am	Sutherland	v	Campbelltown Macarthur
Sun 13-May	South Nowra	2.00pm	12.30pm	Southern Branch	v	North West Sydney GYL
Fri 11-May	Cromer Park	8.15pm	7.00pm	Manly Warringah	v	Bye
				Bye		Wollongong Wolves
Sun 13-May	Lynwood Park	12.30pm	11.15am	Macarthur Rams	v	Bankstown

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE (U13, U14, U15, U17)

Sat 12-May	Nineveh Field	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:45 AM	1:15 PM	Fairfield Bulls	v Marconi Stallions
Sat 12-May	Lynwood Park	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	11:45 AM	1:15 PM	Macarthur Rams	v Manly Warringah Dolphins
Sat 12-May	Hensley Athletic Field	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Eastern Suburbs Wanderers	v Canterbury Marrickville
Sat 12-May	Brandon Park	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Wollongong Wolves	v Newcastle United
Sat 12-May	Jensen Park	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Bankstown City Cubs	v Sutherland Shire
Sat 12-May	Gabbie Stadium	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Blacktown City Demons	v Sydney United
Sat 12-May	Pluim Park	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Central Coast Coasties	v Parramatta Eagles
Sat 12-May	Kingswood Park	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Penrith Panthers	v Leichhardt Tigers
Sat 12-May	Serbian Centre	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v Sydney Olympic
Sat 12-May	Christie Park	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:30 PM	4:15 PM	Northern Spirit	v St George

SUPER CADET LEAGUE (U11, U12)

Sat 12-May	Christie Park	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Northern Spirit	v	St George
Sat 12-May	Jensen Park	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Bankstown City Cubs	v	Sutherland Shire
Sat 12-May	Gabbie Stadium	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Blacktown City Demons	v	Sydney United
Sat 12-May	Pluim Park	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Central Coast Coasties	v	Parramatta Eagles
Sat 12-May	Kingswood Park	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Penrith Panthers	v	Leichhardt Tigers
Sat 12-May	Serbian Centre	9:00 AM	10:15 AM	Bonnyrigg White Eagles	v	Sydney Olympic
Sun 13-May	Lynwood Park	8:45 AM	10:00 AM	Macarthur Rams	v	Manly Warringah Dolphins
Sun 13-May	Hensley Athletic Field	10.00 AM	11:00 AM	Eastern Suburbs Wanderers	v	Canterbury Marrickville
Sun 13-May	Nineveh Field	9:00 AM	10.00 AM	Fairfield Bulls	v	Marconi Stallions
				Wollongong Wolves		Bye

DIVISION ONE YOUTH (U13, U14, U15, U16)

Sat 12-May	Abruzzi Oval	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	AC United	v Mt Pritchard
Sat 12-May	Francis Park	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Blacktown Association	v Illawarra Lions
Sat 12-May	Magdala Oval	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Ryde City	v Hills United
Sat 12-May	Parklands Oval	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Ku-Ring-Gai Association	v Hajduk Wanderers
Sat 12-May	Mingara Club	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Central Coast Lakers	v Stanmore Hawks
Sat 12-May	South Nowra	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Southern Branch	v Nepean Association

DIVISION ONE CADETS (U11, U12)

Sun 13-May	Rockdale Ilinden	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	Rockdale City Suns	v	Illawarra Lions
Sun 13-May	Mingara Club	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	Central Coast Lakers	v	Hajduk Wanderers
Sun 13-May	Cook Park Mt Pritchard	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	Mt Pritchard	v	Camden Tigers
Sun 13-May	Hammondville Park	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	MSC Liverpool	v	Parramatta City
Sun 13-May	Fred Caterson Reserve	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Hills United	v	Ryde City
Sun 13-May	CSI Club	10.00 AM	11:00 AM	Schofields Scorpions	v	AC United
Sun 13-May	Bensons Lane	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Hawkesbury City	v	Stanmore Hawks
Sun 13-May	Beverley Hills Park	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Hurstville City Minotaurs	v	Mt Druitt Town Rangers

DIVISION TWO YOUTH (U13, U14, U15, U16)

Sat 12-May	Eric Primrose Reserve	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Parramatta City	v Camden Tigers
Sat 12-May	Popondetta Park	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Mt Druitt Town	v Schofield Scorpions
Sat 12-May	Hammondville Park	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	MSC Liverpool	v Dulwich Hill
Sat 12-May	Garside Park	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Granville Association	v Hurstville City Minatours
Sat 12-May	Benson's Lane	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Hawkesbury City	v Rockdale City

BELCONNEN Blue Devils and Premier League Gold Medal winner Steve Lazzari spoke to ***Super Soccer***, giving his thoughts on the season just gone. Scoring 14 goals, Lazzari tied with Darren Iocca for the Premier League

SuperSoccer:
What are your thoughts on the 2000/01 Premier League Season ...
Steve Lazzari:
"It was successful, both for the club and for myself to win the Gold Medal.

"I was really happy to get that honour and to be picked for NSW was amazing.

"I'm very excited to be a part of that.

"Also it was successful to receive publicity and attention for the club after winning the award.

"(President) Tony Patterson and all the others have all worked really hard."

SuperSoccer:
Your thoughts on scoring that many goals…
Steve Lazzari:
"I was happy to win the Golden Boot and don't mind sharing it.

"In the future they will just think 'he won the Golden Boot' and they won't take in to account that I'm sharing it with Darren Iocca.

"But I was very happy to get that many goals."

SuperSoccer:
Thoughts on missing out on the Finals ...
Steve Lazzari:
"That was disappointing but it was a two edge sword.

"We were happy just to be up there challenging for a spot.

"But when we didn't make it we were disappointed, but it was nice to be that high in our first season in the Premier League."

SuperSoccer:
On winning the Gold Medal ...
Steve Lazzari:
"Just excellent, I don't know what to say.

"I played in the league down in Canberra for 15 years and never won an award. I came second and third all the time so to step up to this level and win the Gold Medal was amazing."

SuperSoccer:
On the future ...
Steve Lazzari:
"Well I just got retrenched at work but was paid out so I'm not in a rush to find a job for now.

"I might take next year off and look after my two boys and then go training in the night whether it be here in Belconnen or anywhere else.

"I'm 33 now so it's hard on the body but I'll wait and see what happens."

SuperSoccer:
The most pleasing aspect of the season ...
Steve Lazzari:
"Scoring goals and the good spirit at Belconnen.

"It was a side made up mostly of players who had been playing against each other in the local league but I thought that was across the board this season.

"It seemed that nobody took themselves too serious and it was good fun to play in this league."

SuperSoccer:
Most disappointing aspect of the season ...
Steve Lazzari:
"To miss out on the finals.

"But what made it up for me is the fact that I got picked for NSW and will be playing with players from Bonnyrigg and Blacktown so that will give me a taste of the Finals.

"I'm really looking forward to those games against Victoria and Oueensland."

SuperSoccer:
The most memorable moment of the season …
Steve Lazzari:
"One was when we played away against St George and I scored the winner to make it 3-2 with about ten minutes to go.

"That was a great goal.

"And the other would be when we played Bonnyrigg down in Belconnen and one of their defenders played a bad back pass to the keeper.

"I chased it back and thought I had a chance of scoring past their keeper Fernando Greco.

"I came running at him and he just nut-megged

"It was the funniest moment on the field and I remember just cracking up laughing and that for me was the most memorable on-field thing that happened this season.

"And it still sticks out in my mind."

Footballer suspended for 'slave' link

By Kate Connolly in Berlin

A top-flight German football club has suspended one of its star players following revelations that he owns the MV Etireno, the ship allegedly involved in the trafficking of child-workers off the west African coast last month.

Jonathan Akpoborie, a Nigerian striker with VfL Wolfsburg, admits that he owns the ship which was found carrying at least a dozen children destined to be sold into slavery.

VfL Wolfsburg let Akpoborie continue to play, after he initially dismissed the allegations as "rubbish" and a "misunderstanding".

But when the MV Etireno was proved to have been involved in a child-slave network, club managers this week insisted that he travel to Benin's capital, Cotonou, where the ship has been impounded, to shed light on the apparent scandal.

Requests by Akpoborie to take leave were declined; instead he has been officially suspended until further notice.

"Jonathan Akpoborie will be released indefinitely from his contractual obligations so that he can use his time to clear up the allegations," the club said.

Volkswagen, the club's main sponsor, was reported to have put pressure on Wolfsburg management to suspend the player, after its initial inaction.

"Of course we used our influence to pull the ripcord," a VW spokesman, Kurt Rippholz, said.

VW has confirmed that Akpoborie, who is married with two children, will be dismissed from the club if he cannot prove his innocence.

"If there's any stain on the player's character through this matter, neither the [football] union nor the company [VW] would be able to ignore it," Bernd Sudholt, an executive at VW who is on the club's board, told the football magazine Kicker.

"In that case, it would be very difficult for Mr Akpoborie to fulfil his contract with Wolfsburg."

Akpoborie, 32, has repeatedly insisted he is not involved in the slave trade and has denied that he knew the ship was carrying child-workers.

Speaking on German television earlier last week he said the allegations were "invented by competitors". "I'll see anyone who says further untruths against me in a court of law."

Hoping to secure the vessel's release, Akpoborie has been in close contact with authorities in Benin ever since it was impounded.

Since joining Wolfsburg in June 1999, Akpoborie, its second leading scorer, has earned a reputation as one of the better so-called "African goal merchants" playing in Europe.

Akpoborie said he was confident of putting a lid on the scandal.

"I've spoken to the interior ministry and police authorities and I now hope to get official confirmation that my ship was not involved in this affair," he said.

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Bruce Campbell

TALKING FOOTBALL

A FEW weeks ago I was 'taken to task' by someone who after reading a match report I had written asked whether I had been at the same game.

I had slammed the quality of the pitch, which I was later told was fine.

OK, so it is a game of opinions—but how can anyone think a surface is good when the grass is intermingled with spreading crab grass?

The truth is that from the top down the playing surfaces in Australia are a disgrace.

NSL pitches this season have been the worst in recent memory while some of the Premier League tops have been very poor.

I attended one game where clumps of grass were still lying in heaps because the ground staff didn't clear it off in time.

Drop down to regional level leagues and the players are subjected to a variance of only how bumpy, how uneven or how many holes are in the pitch.

There is rarely a case of a good surface.

Ones that do spring to mind are Blacktown, the AIS back pitches and Athletic Field, Sydney United and Marconi.

The rest—they are sub-standard.

If I was a coach I would be looking to my team playing a long ball style with plenty of aerial play in the box because that is the style best suited by poor pitches.

How can you play on the ground when the ball bobbles constantly?

In contrast I took in the televised match from Highbury at the weekend between Arsenal and Leeds United.

While I was impressed to see Harry Kewell warming up with the drills he learned at the NSW Institute of Sport I was even more impressed with the flawless Highbury pitch.

Even after a long and hard season the grass was like a bowling green.

Little wonder then that Arsene Wenger's side play their balls on the ground.

That Arsenal have built up a short passing game is a style could only have been done on a good pitch.

Football in Australia has gone through all sorts of improvements down the decades and today our youth development is rightly regarded as a showpiece for the rest of the world.

But unless the game's administrators can force the clubs to improve their playing surfaces we will hit a standstill.

NSL surfaces which deserve to be highlighted as ranging from bad to just plain lousy include Parramatta Stadium, Wollongong Stadium and Newcastle.

Is it any coincidence that the tenant clubs share these grounds with rugby league sides?

Both codes can share surfaces successfully but the old fashioned rugby league groundsman has to lift his standards first.

North Sydney Oval is also not suitable for first class football.

Sure it is picturesque, and the view over Sydney Harbour at night is majestic—but no-one can play football on the cricket pitch in the middle.

So with the NSW Premier League in recess and the NSL into Finals time it is my hope that the top leagues get their act together in time for next season.

It will take time but the ripple effect will e felt right throughout the world of Australian football.

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SUPER SOCCER'S FEDERATION ROUND-UP

DIVISION 1 ROUND-UP

With Paul Goodwin

ONLY three of the six scheduled matches went ahead in First Division, but given the amount of rain which fell in Sydney and environs over the weekend it was probably a bonus that half the matches were eventually played.

Saturday at Calabria Sports Ground White City enjoyed a comprehensive 8-1 victory at the expense of the hapless Auburn side.

Danny Poljak opened the scoring in the 5th minute after being put through by Ray Mandic and then Richard Varga made it 2-0 in the 29th minute after stealing possession from an Auburn defender and finishing nicely.

A further goal in the 37th from Ray Mandic, who beat the Auburn offside ploy, had the home side well on top by the break.

It was an hour into the game before Auburn could get on the scoresheet and it was from a Kwingsak Chang penalty that they finally broke the ice.

By then, though, Poljak had already scored within the first two minutes of the restart, by getting the better of two defenders on the right, after Mandic had already exchanged passes with Varga and got his side's fourth a minute before him.

Mandic went on to claim his hat trick when he accepted a pass from Danny Blanco, while Costelo Andre de Hog in the 65th also beat two defenders out on the right, with Danny Mihajlovic in the 85th getting the remaining goal of a very one-sided contest.

With no Super League being played on Sunday in Sydney the focus was instead on First and Second Division games, though one of these was staged in the Central West where Bathurst took on Hills United in much drier, if also cooler, conditions; the weather was the only favourable thing for the home side, though, as tbey suffered a 3-1 defeat.

Two down at the break, the locals just could not get back in contention as Hills played it

Bathurst must be rueing their missed chances in this game at Alec Lamberton Field, for, after dominating the opening stanza, they then let Hills in for two very soft goals just before half time.

In the 34th minute a cross from the right was cleared to the edge of the box by the Bathurst defence and Damien Nash smacked the ball into the net with a superb volley to put Hills one up.

Two minutes later Julian Miller made it two after excellent lead-up work by Daniel Mittiga.

The second half was a much more committed effort for the home side and Bathurst went all out to get back into the game.

Adam Collins came to grief in the box after contesting a high ball with the Hills keeper Ricky Oppedisano in the 55th and referee Craig Pearce pointed to the spot.

The resultant penalty was taken by Bathurst keeper Nathan Reid, who was able to break his side's growing sequence of missed penalties, by burying his spot kick easily.

With 15 minutes to go David Steptoe found himself in front of an open goal, only to put the ball over the bar for Bathurst and then five minutes latter Mittiga put the result beyond doubt when he beat the Bathurst keeper to give Hills a 3-1 result for the day.

In the other game at Popondetta Park Mount Druitt shared the spoils with Greystanes in a 1-1 draw.

The sun came out just in time for the first grade game after a showery morning that had seen the pitch becoming increasingly muddy in the middle, but quite playable and in good condition in the goalmouths.

Mount Druitt made most of the early running and Ambrose Marncia went close with a drive in the second minute that shaved the left upright.

In the 15th Mickey Mohamad made an incisive run down the left and jinked his way past two defenders before confronting David Apps in the Greystanes goal and finishing in polished style.

The Mount Druitt defence then became under a lot of pressure as the Stanes' boys got going and it was only another 13 minutes before they drew level.

A throw on the left saw Michael Grass with time to find a man in space and after calling him to make the run Grass fed Brad Racker with a long through-pass.

His team-mate accepted the pass gleefully and then, after sidestepping the last defender, used it to plant the ball easily past keeper Vanburn D' Moirias.

Greystanes had a couple more first half chances, notably in the 41st when a Mark Racker free kick was brilliantly turned away by the keeper who then saved the follow-up shot from Robbie Gibson.

The keeper had also raced off his line to deny Todd Harper in the 32nd minute, while Ambrose Marncia pushed his shot wide from right in front when put through to face the keeper in the 33rd.

The second half was far less eventful than the first with John Walsh firing wide in the last couple of minutes for the home side and then Greystanes missing a golden opportunity in the last minute when a free kick from the left by Gibson eluded Andy Kidd at the far post by what looked no more than a whisker.

PROGRESSIVE SCORERS
7 Rob Smithies (Sydney Uni), Daniel Mittiga (Hills United), 5 Osvaldo El Ali (Illawarra Lions), Danny Poljak (White City), Ray Mandic (White City), 4 Patrick Suriano (Mount Pritchard), Jarrod Nash (Ryde City), Tim Stratford (Ryde), Mark Williamson (Sydney University), Greg Baldock (Belmore), Michael 'Max' Severino (Mt Pritchard), 3 Stephen Pirie (Mount Pritchard), Jimmy Corbo (Belmore), Tony Alilovic (Hurstville), Rob Pirreca (Belmore), Fred Umlil (Sydney University), Costello de Andre Hog (White City), Julian Miller (Hills United), 2 Oliver Vrckovski (Illawarra Lions), Mark Rooke (Bathurst), Nick Mandic (Hurstville), Taner Omac (Auburn), Tony Mihaljevic (Hurstville ZSC), Todd Harper (Greystanes), Darren McCann (Illawarra Lions), Sasha Tanevski (Illawarra Lions), Anthony Oppesidano (Hills United), David Marsiglia (Sydney University, Micky Mohamad (Mount Druitt), 1 Darren Crittenden (Greystanes), Marc Santarossa (Belmore), Rudi Nasser (Belmore), Ambrose Marncia (Mount Druitt), Bill Tsioumas (Mt Druitt), Luke McDougall (Sydney Uni), Peter Vrlic (Mt Pritchard), Andy Stratford (Ryde City), Matthew Percy (Belmore), Daniel Birrane (Greystanes), Peter Krljar (White City), Sasha Tanevski (Illawarra Lions), Dean Golding (Mount Pritchard), Con Paradisis (Belmore), Jama Yusuf (Auburn), Leo Rubio (Auburn), Nick Jamsek (Ryde), Robert Babaic (Hurstville ZSC), Andrew Loxley (Bathurst), Milan Arambasic (White City), Gwang-Ti An (Auburn), Jako Simic (Mount Pritchard), Alan Pavelic (Hurstville), Ante Buntic (Hurstville), Steve Crawhall (Greystanes), Marc Santarossa (Belmore) Sandro Borsato (Illawarra Lions)

Scott Mutton (Bathurst), David Baillie (Bathurst), Andy Kidd (Greystanes), Rob Portelli (Ryde City), Danny Blanco (White City), Adam Obradovic (White City), D Alilovic (Hurstville ASC), Glen Lowe (Mount Pritchard), Michael Grass (Greystanes), M Heaton (Hills United), M Hayes (Auburn), Oliver Vrtkovski (Illawarra Lions), Ollie Gomm (Sydney University), Matthew Brown (Ryde City), N Hall (Ryde City), Joe Moric (Mount Pritchard), Damien Brown (Mount Pritchard), Kwingsak Chang (Auburn), Brad Racker (Greystanes),Richard Varga (White City), Danny Mihajlovic (White City), Damien Nash (Hills United)

DIVISION 2 ROUND-UP

With Paul Goodwin

CONCORD FC began the weekend of football in this division with a Saturday evening game at their new Sid Richards ground behind the Concord RSL, taking on the enterprising Hakoah side.

Concord had won only one of their first six games but an influx of new players, spearheaded by ace marksman and former Apia star Bruno Beddoni had helped them improve in recent weeks.

Hakoah with only a couple of wins to their name, but a formidable strike force, including Ricky Neumann, Terry Sperber and Luke Martin would have started favourites on a very gloomy day for spectators.

It became gloomier still, however, when, after steady rain throughout the lower grade games, the referee decided that the ground was no longer suitable for play to continue into the first grade match.

Earlier in the day, on a pitch that became almost unplayable as the game wore on and with thunder and lightning making conditions somewhat dangerous, Balmain beat the free-scoring team, The Wanderers, 2-1 at Birchgrove Oval.

Balmain did so despite a penalty being saved by Wanderers keeper Owen Rogers when the scores were locked at 1-1.

It was not enough to deny the home side a well-earned win, however, as they literally stormed home, with the eventual winner coming in the 70th minute from K J Thulin.

Max Civili initially levelled for Balmain in the 22nd minute after Ali Fayad had put the visitors ahead in the 13th.

It was a big win for the locals whose recent improvement has not gone unnoticed by their evenly matched opponents across the division.

It was the first loss of the season by the visitors who looked stylish but perhaps did not adapt as well to the sloppy conditions as their hosts, more familiar, perhaps, with the surrounds of their local Oval.

Sunday provided a first win for Uni of NSW who thus ended a run of six straight draws with a 1-0 success at Western Rage, a club which had been doing well to that point.

Nick Kodomichalos got his name on the scoresheet to send the students home happy at last after some frustrating results in recent weeks.

For the home side the result was their first defeat in seven outings and, combined with the Wanderers first loss the previous day, throws the competition wide open once again.

Camden Tigers, under their new coaching team of Ian Lloyd and Dave Cagney, who were appointed on Tuesday, managed a 2-1 win over Central Coast Lakers, despite losing Steve Beever to a red card after 31 minutes.

John Peros demonstrated his ability to break quickly when he got away fast, following some prolonged attack by the home side and his industry for the Lakers enabled him to give them a 70th minute lead.

The visitors reckoned without local hero Tom Bazdaric who produced a 35-yard screamer that found the top right corner of the net for his second goal in as many games after joining the club on loan from Parramatta Eagles.

Then in the 78th minute Will Croker, who had come on as a substitute just five minutes earlier, scored the winner after exchanging passes with Steve Lord to beat keeper Andrew Goldman all ends up.

Camden enjoyed far better weather conditions than the rest of the clubs based in Sydney and were delighted with their afternoon's work and the first win under their new coaches.

PROGRESSIVE SCORERS 2001: 7 Justin Palumbo (Western Rage), 5 Alex Alexander (Parramatta City), Edward Adam (Western Sydney Lions), 4 Andrew Quinnell (Nepean), Omar Makki (The Wanderers), Gareth Martin (Hakoah), Ali Fayad (The Wanderers), 3 R Cannon (Camden Tigers), Richard Astone (Nepean), Warwick Turpin (Balmain), Daniel Lownds (Nepean), Gus Orcajo (The Wanderers), Yousif Assak (Western Sydney Lions), John Peros (Central Coast), K J Thulin (Balmain), Will Croker (Camden), Terry Sperber (Hakoah), 2 Glenn McPherson (Nepean), Chris Smith (Central Coast), Wayne Spiteri (Western Sydney Lions), Enzo Granata (Western Rage), Matt Jaffray (Balmain), Scott Barlow (Balmain), Steve Beever (Camden Tigers), Lee Casha (Parramatta), Ante Zizic (Petersham), Brett Buckpitt (Nepean), Ricky Neumann (Hakoah), Tony Velevski (Petersham), Charly Morales (Western Rage), David Winterton (Uni of NSW), Bruno Beddoni (Concord), Tom Bazdaric (Camden Tigers, Nick Kodamichalos(Uni of NSW), 1 David Oswell (Petersham) David Hardwick (Balmain), Eyton Rubenstein (Hakoah), Charlie Claridge (Uni of NSW), Matt Shepherd (Uni of NSW), Con Dellas (Parramatta City), Keenan Crum (Central Coast), Jeremy Wynne (Central Coast), Alex Fernandez (Concord FC), Mark Tolland (Nepean), Y Alali (Hakoah), Jerry Barros (Petersham), Ersin Husnu (Nepean), D Stacey (Balmain), Justin McLeay(Petersham), Keith Jeffs(Uni of NSW) , Danny Georges (Western Sydney Lions), Sameer Ali (Parramatta), Chris Barry (Parramatta), Paul Talone (Concord), Narongsak Teerapapwises (Concord), Raffaeli Lombard (Western Rage), Danny Wells (The Wanderers), Dean Mackechnie (Camden Tigers), Max Civili (Balmain), Fadi Chedid (Petersham), Antony Pisano (Concord), Costa Boutsikakis (Concord), Neil Groake (Parramatta), Ryan Richards (Western Rage), Oscar Iturra (Uni of NSW), Glen Smith (Camden Tigers), Pierangelo Sitta (Western Rage), Nathan King (Nepean), Kaan Davies (Nepean), David Field (Central Coast), J Anabalon (Western Rage), Tom Bazdaric (Camden Tigers), Lior Segre (Hakoah),,

SUPER SOCCER
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SUPER SOCCER'S BIG EURO REPORT

Bayern the Real deal, Leeds regret misses

LEEDS UNITED 0
VALENCIA 0

REAL MADRID 0
BAYERN MUNICH 1

VALENCIA had goalkeeper Santiago Canizares and the woodwork to thank for helping them to hold Leeds United to a 0-0 draw in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final.

Valencia, now in the driving seat for the home leg next week, enjoy a 100 percent record from their five previous European semi-finals including qualifying for last season's Champions League final.

The Spanish side were reinforced by the return of Argentina's Kily Gonzalez and Fabian Ayala, who missed Saturday's 1-0 win over Real Valladolid in the Spanish league.

They faced a Leeds side still underdogs in the tournament despite conquering Lazio and Barcelona in earlier rounds.

David O'Leary's side went straight on the attack and dead ball specialist Ian Harte had a curling free-kick palmed over the bar.

Juan Sanchez probed on the right in the 12th minute and tall striker John Carew launched himself acrobatically at his cross, forcing an excellent full length save from Nigel Martyn.

Then midfielder Gaizka Mendieta headed against the bar after Leeds failed to clear a Gonzalez cross.

Leeds came close to snatching a goal minutes before the interval when Harry Kewell headed a free-kick back into the heart of the penalty area.

Rio Ferdinand touched the ball on and Alan Smith inexplicably nodded wide at the far post.

Canizares produced a wonder save in the 51st minute to claw out Dominic Matteo's header after he was left unmarked at the far post to latch onto Lee Bowyer's flick on from a corner.

And the bar was next to save Valencia as Smith's deflected cross took an age to drop and Bowyer could only guide his header against the woodwork.

Valencia were only denied a lead in injury time by Ferdinand's header off his own line that kept out substitute Vicente's dipping shot.

Leeds will have to hope their missed chances don't comeback to haunt when they travel to Mestalla this week to face a Valencia side that will be missing the suspended Amedeo Carboni and Ruben Baraja, both booked at Elland Road.

The winners of the second leg will meet either Bayern Munich or holders Real Madrid in the final in Milan on May 23.

Leeds United manager David O'Leary bemoaned his lack of attacking options.

Leeds, whose usual first choice striker Robbie Keane is ineligible for the competition after playing for Inter Milan, did not have an extra forward on the bench for the game at Elland Road.

"We have limits with our squad," O'Leary said.

"You would love to send on Robbie Keane and change it.

"We just have two forwards for our opponents to play against.

"But I know on our day we can score an away goal and it's amazing how an away goal can change things."

Valencia had to beat Arsenal in the previous round to go through.

They did so on the basis of their away goal in a 2-1 defeat at Highbury in the first leg, winning the second leg 1-0 with a late strike from John Carew.

"If I was in Valencia now I would be thinking this was a good result," O'Leary said.

"But I would be concerned about losing an away goal to us.

"We didn't get the rub of the green tonight... We could have been 2-0 up.

"But these games aren't decided by three or four goals.

"These games are decided by one chance or a little break that you take."

Valencia coach Hector Cuper, whose side reached the final last year, is refusing to admit they now have an advantage.

He praised his team for coping with the aerial threat of Leeds at set-pieces.

"The result is the result. I would rather have won of course," he said.

"They are capable of scoring a goal in the Mestalla but so are we.

"Today we had reason to suffer.

"We had an ambitious side against us, a team that creates danger in the penalty area.

"The defence was well organised but we had to take care of people like (Alan) Smith, (Mark) Viduka and (Harry) Kewell.

"They created a couple of chances that were dangerous but so did we," Cuper said.

Both sides hit the bar with headers, Gaizka Mendieta for Valencia in the first half and Lee Bowyer for Leeds in the second.

Each goalkeeper was also kept busy with Valencia's Santiago Canizares making one outstanding save in the 51st minute to claw out a Dominic Matteo header just as it was crossing the line.

Nigel Martyn in the Leeds goal was twice forced to make excellent first half stops to keep out an acrobatic attempt from John Carew and a low drive from Juan Sanchez.

Central defender Rio Ferdinand saved Leeds at the death with a header off his own line after substitute Vicente's mishit shot looped over Martyn.

Valencia will be without suspended duo Amedeo Carboni and Ruben Baraja, who were both booked at Elland Road, for the second leg at Mestalla this week.

Bayern Munich took a precious 1-0 win from the first leg of their Champions League semi-final at Real Madrid thanks to a brilliant first-time strike from Elber and an inspired display from goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

Leeds United 0 Valencia 0
Champions League, semi-final first leg
Halftime: 0-0
Attendance: 36,437
Referee: Pierluigi Collina (Italy)
Leeds United: 1-Nigel Martyn; 18-Danny Mills, 29-Rio Ferdinand, 21-Dominic Matteo, 3-Ian Harte; 11-Lee Bowyer, 23-David Batty, 4-Olivier Dacourt, 10-Harry Kewell; 9-Mark Viduka, 17-Alan Smith.
Valencia: 1-Santiago Canizares, 2-Mauricio Pellegrino, 12-Roberto Ayala, 15-Amedeo Carboni 20-Jocelyn Angloma; 6-Gaizka Mendieta, 23-David Albelda, 19-Ruben Baraja, 17-Juan Sanchez (8-Zlatko Zahovic, 66), 18-Kily Gonzalez (14-Vincente 90); 7-John Carew.

Valencia's John Carew celebrates. Leeds United now have an uphill struggle in the second leg.

Bayern, beaten by Real at the semi-final stage last season, had to withstand a furious attacking spell from the reigning European champions in the first half.

Real's three clearest opportunities went fractionally wide, though, and Bayern, just as they had in the quarter-finals against Manchester United, struck in the second half to give themselves a valuable away goal to take back for the second leg.

Elber latched on to a loose ball around 20 metres out, turned and swept in at the near post as Real keeper Iker Casillas appeared late to get down on the bouncing ball.

Kahn, who had saved brilliantly from Steve McManamn two minutes before Bayern's surprise goal, repeated the trick a minute later as the England midfielder burst through on the left.

And the German keeper did wonderfully well to keep out a Michel Salgado strike at his near post as Real threw everything at the visitors.

The only consolation for Real was the yellow card for Stefan Effenberg that will rule the influential Bayern skipper out of the return leg.

Real went into the game buoyed by their 3-2 aggregate victory over Bayern in the semifinals last season.

That success was built on a 2-0 win in the home leg and saw them go on to beat Valencia 3-0 in the final and secure an unprecedented eighth European Cup win.

Vicente del Bosque's side started with the same conviction, with Figo a particular menace as he took on a free role behind the front pairing of Raul and Guti.

After two snap-shots from Raul, Real had three clear chances in the first half, each time coming within a whisker of breaking the deadlock. On 16 minutes, Michel Salgado got behind Bixente Lizarazu for the first time in the match.

His dinked cross-shot beat Oliver Kahn but there was no-one there to convert.

Raul was then put through on the left by Figo's astute through-ball on the half-hour and his first-time shot drifted agonisingly wide of Kahn's right-hand post.

And seven minutes before halftime Ivan Helguera bypassed the Bayern defence and put in a clever ball that Guti just missed, the ball again rolling wide. But Bayern had warned once in the first period that they could be dangerous as well as Mehmet Scholl slanted the ball wide at the end of a swift breakaway.

The Real defence went to sleep for only the second time 10 minutes after the break and that was enough for Elber to put his side ahead as he stunned the home side with his sweetly times strike.

Real laid siege to the Bayern goal for much of the remainder of the game but the excellence of Kahn and the determination of his defence kept the Spaniards out.

Del Bosque threw on winger Pedro Munitis for defender Salgado with 23 minutes to go but Real tired in the closing stages and were grateful in the end that Paulo Sergio was just off target with his late chance.

Real Madrid 0 Bayern Munich 1
Champions League, semi-final first leg
Scorer: Elber 55
Halftime: 0-0
Attendance: 75,000
Referee: Hugh Dallas (Scotland)
Real Madrid: 25-Iker Casillas; 2-Michel Salgado (17-Pedro Munitis 77), 18-Aitor Karanka, 4-Fernando Hierro (captain), 3-Roberto Carlos; 6-Ivan Helguera, 24-Claude Makelele, 10-Luis Figo, 8-Steve McManaman; 7-Raul, 14-Guti (11-Savio 54) Bayern Munich: 1-Oliver Kahn; 4-Sammy Kuffour, 5-Patrik Andersson, 25-Thomas Linke; 2-Willy Sagnol, 16-Jens Jeremies, 11-Stefan Effenberg (captain), 3-Bixente Lizarazu; 20-Hasan Salihamidzic, 9-Elber (19-Carsten Jancker 74), 7-Mehmet Scholl (13-Paulo Sergio 72)

SUPER SOCCER'S NSWSL BIG MATCH REPORT

Bourke impresses in the wet as Liverpool's injury crisis worsens

By Andrew Aiton

MACARTHUR RAMS 4
MSC LIVERPOOL 1

ON a rain slicked pitch at Lynwood Park, Macarthur Rams always looked the more likely to win against an injury ridden MSC Liverpool.

The game came to life after 30 minutes with two goals for the Rams and one for Liverpool in the space of three minutes. Liverpool never gave up but after Mat Harrison was shown a second yellow card in the 57th the Rams used their one man advantage to cruise home to a comfortable victory.

MSC started off under strength with Peter Moon out for at least another two weeks with an injured ankle, Marcello Ortez off with a hamstring and Joshua Wells still suspended.

Liverpool brought back to the starting line up, from Stanmore, mid-fielder Jamie Amendolia and had Ismael Arrarte from Northern Spirit on the bench in an attempt to plug the gaps.

Liverpool woes continued to build when keeper Adam Confoy came off in the 10th with torn calf muscle.

Coach Brian Dene was at least encouraged by replacement keeper Travis Glen who looked sharp when he confidently dived forward to intercept a dangerous low cross from the Rams Martin Bourke out on the left. The Rams were in command for the first 20 minutes with Bourke looking impressive in mid-field.

In the 14th minute a cross from the left by Zia Younan gave an unmarked Kory Babington a great opportunity for the Rams but he shot weakly at the keeper. The sparse crowd appreciated the work effort by both teams but many passes were going astray in the greasy conditions.

Liverpool's first sustained attack began in the 27th when a move by Sal Zulo, Robert Cicek and Brett Hewit stretched the Ram's defence but eventually Tom Tregear's long range shot was comfortably collected by keeper Chad Taylor.

Taylor drop kicked a long ball down the field where an unmarked Gregory King brought the ball quickly under control, ran forward and scored giving keeper Glen no chance.

Bourke intercepted from the Liverpool kick off and a long accurate pass found Younan on the left, who slipped the ball to Gary Attard in the penalty box. Attard coolly flicked it over an advancing keeper Glen who was desperately trying to close him down as other defenders stood by.

The Rams had their second goal in the bag before officials had updated the scoreboard for the first. Liverpool kept the scoreboard officials on their toes when only a minute later a long ball out of defence was latched onto by Clinton Green who converted from the edge of the penalty area without giving keeper Taylor a chance.

However, the Rams were keeping up the pressure and just before the break MSC keeper Glen stopped a shot from Babington and cut out a dangerous curling cross from Bourke.

It seemed all over for Liverpool in the 57th when Harrison was expelled after a second yellow card, this time for a late tackle.

However, a minute later Zed Momircevski was presented with an open goal after Rams Benjamin Kirkman tried to clear a cross from Tregear, but had an air shot with the ball running through to Zed who was surprised and hurriedly shot past the goal.

The Rams sealed Liverpool's fate in the 61st when a cross from Babington on the right was scrambled home by Attard from close range.

The Rams were cruising now with Bourke causing havoc with short passing down the left and long cross field passes to the right.

In another passing move initiated by Bourke, and involving Christian Cevenini and Younan, Leigh Gunn put the matter beyond doubt in the 87th.

Liverpool's woes continued as they were reduced to nine men when Tregear had to leave the field with concussion in injury time.

Tregear had covered a lot of ground in both defence and attack in a valiant attempt to bring his team back to terms.

"We gave away two goals with sloppy defending," said Liverpool Coach Brian Dene.

"We were always chasing and we're not patient enough with our build ups.

Macarthur Rams 4 (King 30m, Attard 31m, 61m, Gunn 87))
MSC Liverpool 1 (Green 33m)
Referee: Jonathon Streater
Macarthur Rams: C. Taylor, W. Horne, B. Kirkman, D. Maude, T Judge, M. Bourke, R. Harrison, K Babington, G. King (L. Gunn 85m), Z. Younan, G. Attard (C. Cevenini 85m) Cautions: M Bourke 5m, B. Kirkman 65m
MSC Liverpool: A. Confoy (T. Glen 10m), T. Tregear (retired 90m+), D. Opsal (J. Corrente 67m), Z. Momircevski, M. Harrison, J. Amendolia, C Green, R. Cicek, B. Hewit, S Watkins, S. Zullo (I. Arrarte 60m) Cautions: M. Harrison 42m,57m, R. Cicek 74m, S. Watkins 80m

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NSL EXTRA: GLORY PLAYERS ATTACKED BY KNIGHTS FANS

PERTH Glory players and officials were punched and kicked after being ambushed by Melbourne Knights fans in a sickening display of soccer violence after Sunday night's NSL elimination final.

A Knights official even admitted the club deserved to be kicked out of the national soccer league after the violence.

The 0-0 draw at Sunshine's Somers St ground was held up after Knights fans tossed flares onto the ground and fights broke out on the terraces.

But that paled into insignificance as the players and coach Bernd Stange ran a gauntlet of fists and kicks after the match.

The trouble flared after security guards escorted the Glory players back through the empty grandstand instead of the changeroom exit to avoid any trouble as they left for the team bus.

However, the hooligans had somehow found out about the detour and charged straight through the security escort, lashing out at the Glory players with striker Bobby Despotovski singled out for special attention.

A security guard, who jumped in to help Despotovski, was smashed to the ground and then repeatedly kicked in the head by another thug.

The Glory players tried to pull Despotovski clear but had to wear non-stop blows as they retreated back to the relative safety of the players' race.

Stange was nursing a bruised thigh after a fan lashed out at him as he raced back from the brawling thugs. Defender Craig Deans managed to free Despotovski and with goalkeeper Jason Petkovic sprinted back to the rooms.

All were carrying bruises but the security official was kicked senseless, his face was swollen, his teeth covered in blood and his eyes glazed as he was supported into the rooms for treatment.

Grim-faced Knights' spokesman Tonci Prusac was sickened by the violence which erupted directly in front of the press box.

"We deserve to be thrown out after that," Prusac said.

The Melbourne Knights could face expulsion from the national soccer league after thugs attacked the Perth Glory team as it left Knights' Stadium last night.

Soccer Australia is waiting to hear a full report from security, police and both teams before deciding what action to take but the authority is certain to come down hard on the Sunshine club which is no stranger to crowd trouble.

Knights supporters said Despotovski had made racial taunts during the game.

Soccer Australia chairman Tony Labbozzetta was left wondering how it had happened and said it was the first time a team had ever been attacked in the national league.

"There's no excuse, the security has failed in its duty to protect the player and the coach," Labbozzetta said.

Knights' spokesman Tonci Prusac said the club deserved to be expelled for what happened. Soccer Australia plans to cut the league from 15 to 12 teams next season and the Eastern Pride is certain to go.

The shameful episode will now put the Knights under the microscope.

SCOREBOARD

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS
April 30
World Cup Asian zone qualifying group one

Oman 12 Laos 0
Scorers: Oman - Hani Dhabit 5, Taqi Mubarak 21, Hani Dhabit 23 (pen), 30, 45, 90 Yaqoob Juma 39, 44, Nasser Said 61
(pen), Fauzi Basheer 81, Mohammed Khamis 84, Fauzi Basheer 85 Halftime: 8-0

Syria 12 Philippines 0
Scorers: Syria - Sayed Bayazid 14, 16, 54, 77, 80 Tariq Jabban 25 Bashar Sourour 29 pen Lohad Hajj Mustafa 45 Rajhdan Shaade 47 Mohannad Boushi 60 Mohannad Afash 75 pen Moher Melki 89
Halftime: 5-0 Attendance: 35,000

May 4
Oman 7 Laos 0
Scorers: Hani Dhabit 15pen, 78, Taqi Mubarak 36, Mohammed Khamis 38, 41, Yaqoob Juma 42, Majdi Shaaban 90 Halftime: 5-0

Syria 5 Philippines 1 (scorers unavailable)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	2	2	0	0	19	0	6
Syria	2	2	0	0	17	1	6
Philippines	2	0	0	2	1	17	0
Laos	2	0	0	2	0	19	0

World Cup Asia zone
group seven qualifiers
Turkmenistan 2 Uzbekistan 5
Scorers: Turkmenistan - Vladimir Bayramov 42, 44 Uzbekistan - Mirdjalal Kasimov 21 pen, Jafar Irismetov 35, Ulugbek Bakayev 48, Andrey Akopyants 82, Georgi Georgieve 88
Halftime 2-2; Attendence 1,000

Teams Turkmenistan: 16-Aleksandr Korobko; 2-Gochkuli Gochkuliyev; 4-Aleksandr Ignatov; 5-Jumadurdy Meredov; 6-Kurbangeldi Durdnev (3-Vladimir Miller 62); 21-Vladimir Bayramov; 11-Rejepmurat Agabayev; 15-Omar Berdiyev; 19-Yuriy Magdiyev; 20 Begenchmukhammet Kuliyev; 22-Yuriy Bordolimov

Uzbekistan: 21-Oleg Belyakov; 4-Mirdjalal Kasimov 15-Davranjon Fayziev; 8-Vladimir Maminov; 27-Mukhtar Kurbanov (10-Ulugbek Bakayev 46); 11-Jafar Irismetov (9-Georgi Georgiev 80); 17-Alexander Khvostunov; 20-Fevzi Davletov; 22-Nikolay Shirshov; 24-Marat Akhmerov (7-Andrey Akopyants 46); 23-Ilyas Zeytulayev

Jordan 6 Taiwan 0
Scorers: Esam Abu Touk 45, 49 pen, Badran al-Shaqran 61, Rateb Awadat 85, Ghanem Hamarsheh 87, 89
Red card: Chen Chun-Chieh 84 (Taiwan) Halftime: 1-0; Attendence: 10,000

Teams Jordan: 1-Ahmad al-Khazaleh; 5-Adnan al-Shwaibat; ; 11-Esam Abu Touk; 12-Bilal Laham; 14-Haitham al-Shboul (19-Mu'yed Mansour 66); 15-Rateb Awadat; 16-Jamal Abu Abed; 7-Faisal Ibrahim; 20-Badran Shaqran (13-Ra'affat Jaber 68); 10-Ghanem Hamarsheh; 21-Ashraf Shatat

Taiwan: 28-Tsai Yuan-Chu (1-Yang Cheng-Hsing 23); 6-Cheng Yung-Jen; 7-Sheu Sheau-Bao (14-Shen Chai-Fu 32); 8-Cheng Sheng-Jen; 9-Hau Jui-Chen; 10-Chen Jui-Te; 11-Huang Che-Ming; 12-Chen Jiunn-Ming; 15-Chaung Yao-Tsung; 13-Wang Chien-Hsiang;
19-Pan Kuao-Kai

Taiwan 0 Uzbekistan 4
Scorers: Jafar Irismetov 14, 90, Mirdjalal Kasimov 56, 58
Halftime: 0-1; Attendence: 1,000

Teams Taiwan: 1-Yang Cheng-Hsing; 2-Chen Chun Chieh, 24-Chen Chun Nan, 17-Tu Chu-Hsien, 14-Shen Chai Fu, 3-Tu Ming Feng, 13-Wang Chien Hstang, 18-Wang Jieh-Wen, 10-Chen Jui-te (12-Chen Jiunn-Ming 28), 11-Huang Che-Ming (8-Cheng Sheng-Jen 43), 16-Wang Po Min.

Uzbekistan: 13-Oleg Pashinin; 25-Aleksey Dionisiev, 20-Fevzi Davletov, 22-Nikolay Shirshov (27-Mukhtar Kurbanov 46), 8-Vladimir Maminov, 4-Mirdjalal Kasimov, 11-Jafar Irismetov, 2-Bakhtiyor Asurmatov, 10-Ulugbek Bakayev (7-Andrey Akopyants 32), 16-Evgene Safonov; 17-Alexander Khvostunov.

United Arab Emirates 4 Brunei Darussalam 0
Scorers - Yaser Salem 20, 50, Saeed Al Kas 70, Faisal Khalil
86 Halftime: 1-0; Attendance 6,000

May 4th
Yemen 3 India 3
Scorers: Yemen - Adel al-Salemi 13pen, 20, 62 India - Jo Paul Anchery 16, Khalid Ahmed Jamil 38, I M. Vijayan 51
Halftime: 2-2; Attendance: 30,000

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	4	3	0	1	17	1	9
Yemen	4	2	2	0	10	4	8
India	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Brunei	4	0	0	4	0	22	0

Next matches:
May 11 Yemen v UAE
May 12 Brunei Darussalam v India

May 6
World Cup African group A qualifier
Angola 2 Cameroon 0
Scorers: Akwa 59, Quinzinho 69
Half-time: 0-0; Attendance: 40,000

Togo 3 Zambia 2
Scorers:
Togo - Komlan Assignon 48, Jerome Dote 80, Eric Akoto 85
Zambia - Elie Jatana 6pen, Janvoini Izimbo 65
Halftime: 0-1; Attendance: 20,000

World Cup African zone group B qualifier
Nigeria 2 Liberia 0
Played earlier on Saturday:
Sierra Leone 1 Ghana 1
Scorers: Sierra Leone - Alpha Joh 85pen Ghana - Quami Ayu 26
Halftime 0-1; Attendance 25,000

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liberia	6	4	0	2	8	6	12
Nigeria	6	3	1	2	8	3	10
Sudan	5	3	0	2	5	5	9
Ghana	5	1	2	2	7	5	5
Sierra Leo	6	1	1	4	2	11	4

Next matches:
July 1 - Liberia v Ghana
July 1 - Sudan v Nigeria

World Cup African zone group C qualifier
Algeria 1 Morocco 2
Scorers: Algeria - Tasfaout 8
Morocco - Benmahmoud 16, Amzine 47
Halftime: 1-1; Attendance: 20,000

World Cup African zone group C qualifier
May 6
Egypt 1 Senegal 0
Scorer: Ahamed Hosam 48
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 100,000

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	6	3	3	0	7	2	12
Senegal	5	2	3	0	8	1	9
Egypt	4	1	3	0	6	3	6
Algeria	6	1	1	4	6	13	4
Namibia	5	0	2	3	1	9	2

Next matches:
June 30 Morocco v Egypt
June 30 Namibia v Algeria

World Cup qualifier, African Zone, Group D
Madagascar 0 Tunisia 2
Scorers: Ali Zitouni 80, Imed Mhedhedi 87 Halftime: 0-0

World Cup qualifier, African Zone, Group E
South Africa 2 Zimbabwe 1
Scorers:
South Africa: Shaun Bartlett 17, Benni McCarthy 39
Zimbabwe: Peter Ndlovu 53pen
Halftime: 2-0; Attendance: 15,000

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Afr	4	4	0	0	7	2	12
Zimbabwe	4	2	0	2	5	5	6
Burkina F	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Malawi	4	0	1	3	4	9	1

Note: Guinea expelled from World Cup by Fifa on 19/03/01 and results of matches against Guinea expunged from records.

World Cup Asian zone, group nine qualifier
May 6
Maldives 0 Indonesia 2
Scorers: Kurniawan Dwi Yulianto 10, Ismed Sofyan 50
Halftime: 0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Indonesia	4	4	0	0	15	0	12
China	3	3	0	0	15	1	9
Maldives	6	1	1	4	8	19	4
Cambodia	5	0	1	4	1	19	1

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Champions League, semi-final first leg
May 1
Real Madrid 0 Bayern Munich 1
Scorer: Elber 55
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 75,000

May 2
Leeds United 0 Valencia 0
Halftime: 0-0; Attendance: 36,437

AUSTRIA
May 2
Austria Vienna 1 Ried 1
Tyrol Innsbruck 3 Graz AK 0
Bregenz 1 Rapid Vienna 0

BELARUS
May 2
Belarus Cup quarter-final, second leg (Roman numerals in brackets denote division of non championship teams):
Dynamo Minsk 3 Shakhtyor Soligorsk 2
(Dynamo win 6-3 on aggregate)
Belshina Bobruisk 3 Gomel 1
(Belshina win 5-3 on aggregate)
Torpedo-Kadino Mogilev (II) 0
Vedrich-97 Rechitsa 2
(Vedrich-97 win 4-0 on aggregate)
BATE Borisov 1 Slavia Mozyr 3
(3-3 on aggregate, Slavia win on the away goal rule)

AUSTRIA
May 3
Austrian league championship
LASK Linz 1 Admira Moedling 3
Sturm Graz 2 SV Salzburg 1

BELGIUM
May 4
Result of a Belgian first division
Mechelen 0 Antwerp 3
May 5
Belgian first division
Club Bruges 0 Anderlecht 1
May 6
Eendracht Aalst 4 Charleroi 0
Westerlo 1 Harelbeke 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Anderlecht	32	23	8	1	82	24	77
Club Bruges	32	21	9	2	75	24	72
Stand Liege	32	16	11	5	70	38	59
G Brschot	32	17	3	12	61	48	54
Ghent	32	15	8	9	56	46	53
Lokeren	32	14	9	9	50	41	51
Westerlo	32	14	8	10	57	51	50
E'sior Mcn	32	14	7	11	59	47	49
Charleroi	32	13	5	14	49	58	44
Lierse	32	12	6	14	43	48	42
Genk	32	10	9	13	43	45	39
Antwerp	32	11	5	16	37	44	38
Beveren	32	9	8	15	27	57	35
Sint-T'den	32	8	7	17	36	52	31
La Louviere	32	6	11	15	29	51	29
Ed'racht A't	32	7	7	18	32	60	28
Harelbeke	32	7	4	21	33	74	25
Mechelen	32	4	9	19	39	70	21

BULGARIA
May 2
Bulgarian Cup semi-final second leg
Levski Sofia 1 Lovech 0
Lovech win 4-1 on aggregate
Velbazhd Kyustendil 5 Lokomotiv Sofia 1
Velbazhd win 6-2 on aggregate
Final to be played on May 24.

CROATIA
May 2
Croatian premier league
Six team league playing off for the title:
Zagreb 0 Hajduk 2
Varteks 3 Dinamo 1
Slaven Belupo 1 Osijek 2
May 6
Zagreb 3 Varteks 3
Hajduk 1 Slaven Belupo 0
Played on Saturday:
Osijek 1 Dinamo 4

Six-member league playing off for the title:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	29	18	6	5	58	20	60
Dinamo	29	16	8	5	61	34	56
Osijek	29	15	6	8	57	41	51
Varteks	29	11	9	9	51	49	42
Slaven B'p	29	10	11	8	34	29	41
Zagreb	29	11	5	13	50	52	38

Six team league playing off to avoid relegation
Marsonia 2 Cakovec 1
Rijeka 1 Sibenik 2
Cibalia 1 Hrv.Dragovoljac 1

May 6
Sibenik 2 Cikovec 0
Hrv.Dragovoljac 1 Rijeka 4
Cibalia 2 Marsonia 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sibenik	29	12	5	12	37	36	41
Cakovec	29	8	8	13	24	36	32
Cibalia	29	5	16	8	29	42	31
Hrv.Drag	29	7	9	13	33	54	30
Rijeka	29	7	6	16	27	42	27
Marsonia	29	6	7	16	37	63	25

NOTE - Croatian premier league broke off after 22 rounds to split into two six-member leagues. The first group plays off for the title and places in Europe, the second to avoid relegation.

CZECH
May 2
Czech Cup semi-final
Sparta Prague 2 Blsany 0
Played on Tuesday:
Viktoria Zizkov 3 Slavia Prague 1
Final to be played in Prague on May 28.

DENMARK
May 2
Danish cup semifinal first leg
AB Copenhagen 1 Viborg 0
Scorer - Christian Lundberg-6
Halftime: 1-0; Attendance: 1,680
Second leg on May 10

ENGLAND
May 1
English premier league
Bradford 0 Liverpool 2
Newcastle 1 Southampton 1

Division one
Gillingham 0 Watford 3
Wimbledon 1 Huddersfield 1
Wolverhampton 0 Bolton 2

May 2
Division one
Portsmouth 2 Crystal Palace 4
Preston 0 Blackburn 1
Played on Tuesday:
Gillingham 0 Watford 3
Wimbledon 1 Huddersfield 1
Wolverhampton 0 Bolton 2
May 2
Division two
Cambridge United 2 Colchester 1
Oxford United 1 Port Vale 1
Swansea 6 Brentford 0

Division three
Lincoln 1 Carlisle 1
Played on Tuesday:
Brighton 1 Chesterfield 0
Mansfield 3 Darlington 2
Rochdale 2 Plymouth 1
Shrewsbury 2 York 0
Southend 1 Hull 1

May 3
Division two
Brentford 2 Luton 2
Notts County 2 Colchester 2
Port Vale 0 Walsall 2

May 5
English Premier league
Arsenal 2 Leeds United 1
Aston Villa 3 Coventry City 2
Bradford City 1 Middlesbrough 1
Chelsea 2 Everton 1
Leicester City 4 Tottenham 2
Liverpool 3 Newcastle United 0
Manchester Utd 0 Derby County 1
Sunderland 3 Charlton Athletic 2
West Ham United 3 Southampton 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	36	24	8	4	77	26	80
Arsenal	36	20	9	7	61	35	69
Liverpool	36	19	8	9	65	37	65
Leeds	36	18	8	10	55	41	62
Ipswich	36	19	5	12	54	40	62
Chelsea	36	16	9	11	64	42	57
Sunderland	37	15	11	11	44	39	56
Aston Villa	37	13	15	9	46	40	54
Charlton	37	14	10	13	50	53	52
Leicester	37	14	6	17	38	48	48
Newcastle	36	13	8	15	41	50	47
Tottenham	37	12	10	15	44	53	46
Sthmptn	36	12	10	14	35	45	46
West Ham	37	10	12	15	44	48	42
Everton	37	11	8	18	43	57	41
Derby C	37	10	11	16	36	58	41
M,brough	37	8	15	14	42	43	39
Man City	36	8	10	18	39	61	34
Coventry	37	8	9	20	36	63	33
Bradford	36	5	10	21	29	64	25

May 6
Division One
Bolton 1 Sheffield United 1
Burnley 2 Watford 0
Gillingham 1 Blackburn 1
Grimsby 1 Fulham 0
Huddersfield 1 Birmingham 2
Portsmouth 3 Barnsley 0
Preston 2 West Bromwich 1
Sheffield Wednesday 0 Crewe 0
Stockport 0 Crystal Palace 1
Tranmere 2 Nottingham Forest 2
Wimbledon 0 Norwich 0
Wolverhampton 1 QPR 1

Final Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Fulham	46	30	11	5	90	32	101
Blackburn	46	26	13	7	76	39	91
Bolton	46	24	15	7	76	45	87
Preston	46	23	9	14	64	52	78
B'ham	46	23	9	14	59	48	78
West Brom	46	21	11	14	60	52	74
Burnley	46	21	9	16	50	54	72
Wimbledon	46	17	18	11	71	50	69
Watford	46	20	9	17	76	67	69
Sheff Utd	46	19	11	16	52	49	68
Nott Frst	46	20	8	18	55	53	68
Wolves	46	14	13	19	45	48	55
G'ham	46	13	16	17	61	66	55
Crewe	46	15	10	21	47	62	55
Norwich	46	14	12	20	46	58	54
Barnsley	46	15	9	22	49	62	54
Sheff Wed	46	15	8	23	52	71	53
Grimsby	46	14	10	22	43	62	52
Stockport	46	11	18	17	58	65	51
Portsmouth	46	10	19	17	47	59	49
C Palace	46	12	13	21	57	70	49
H'field	46	11	15	20	48	57	48
QPR	46	7	19	20	45	75	40
Tranmere	46	9	11	26	46	77	38

FINLAND
May 3
Finnish first division soccer
KuPS Kuopio 0 FC Jokerit 0
FC Atlantis 1 Haka Valkeakoski 1
VPS Vaasa 0 HJK Helsinki 4
FC Lahti 0 Inter Turku 2
Tampere United 0 Pori Jazz 0
MyPa 1 RoPS Rovaniemi 1

FRANCE
May 4
French first division
RC Lens 1 Troyes 1

GEORGIA
May 5 (Reuters)(DS) - Results of Georgian premier division
Group A
Torpedo Kutaisi 1 WIT Georgia 1
Dynamo Tbilisi 4 Merani 9 1
Tbilisi 0 Lokomotivi Tbilisi 2
Kolkheti 191 3 Poti 2
Group B
Sioni Bolnisi 1 Iberia Samtredia 0
Gorda Rustavi 1 Dynamo Batumi 1
Dila Gori 4 TSU Armazi Tbilisi 0

GERMANY
May 4
German first division
Borussia Drtmund 0 VfB Stgart 0

May 5
German first division
Bayer Leverk 0 Bayern Munich 1
TSV 1860 Munich 3 Cologne 1
Schalke 04 2 VfL Wolfsburg 1
Eintracht Frank 3 VfL Bochum 0
Hansa Rstck 1 Energie Cottbus 0
Hamburg SV 1 Kaiserslautern 1

May 6
Werder Brmn 0 SpVUntrhching 0
SC Freiburg 1 Hertha Berlin 0

GREECE
May 6
PAS Ioannina 2 Aris Salonika 1
Iraklis 4 Athinaikos 2
Kalamata 1 OFI Crete 4
Panchaiki 3 Paniliakos 0
Panionios 2 Olympiakos 1
Xanthi 3 Ethnikos Asteras 1
PAOK Salonika 1 Ionikos 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Olympiakos	28	24	2	2	81	20	74
P'thinaikos	27	18	6	3	53	17	60
AEK Athn	27	16	4	7	54	32	52
PAOK	28	13	9	6	59	44	48
Iraklis	28	13	4	11	42	36	43
Ionikos	28	11	8	9	41	42	41
Aris S'nka	28	12	4	12	32	37	40
Xanthi	28	11	5	12	23	33	38
Panionios	28	9	9	10	37	36	36
Panachaiki	28	9	6	13	38	47	33
OFI Crete	28	7	8	13	36	48	29
PAS Io'na	28	7	8	13	36	52	29
Et'kos Atr's	28	7	7	14	29	51	28
Paniliakos	28	6	8	14	23	41	26
Kalamata	28	4	9	15	36	59	21
Athinaikos	28	5	5	18	36	61	20

HOLLAND
May 2
Dutch first division
Heerenveen 1 Utrecht 2

May 3
Dutch first division
RKC Waalwijk 2 Ajax 2

May 5
Dutch first division
Twente Ensch 4 RBC Rosendaal 1
Vitesse Arnhem 1 Roda JC 1
AZ Alkmaar 2 Willem II Tilburg 3
PSV Eindhoven 3 Heerenveen 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
PSV Eind	31	22	8	1	64	18	74
Feyenoord	30	19	2	9	58	29	59
Roda JC	31	16	8	7	53	34	56
Ajax	30	16	7	7	73	35	55
Vitesse Arn	30	14	9	7	49	40	51
Utrecht	30	15	6	9	47	41	51
RKC W'jk	31	13	11	7	42	33	50
Willem II	31	12	9	10	53	46	45
Heerenveen	31	11	11	9	48	39	44
NAC B'da	30	11	8	11	36	39	41
NEC N'gen	30	9	13	8	38	41	40
Twente Ens	31	9	10	12	43	56	37
Groningen	30	8	8	14	34	44	32
AZ Alk	31	8	7	16	39	56	31
G'chap D	30	8	3	19	39	60	27
Fortuna S'd	30	6	7	17	24	56	25
Sparta Rott	30	6	5	19	39	64	23
RBC R'dl	31	4	2	25	36	84	14

HUNGARY
May 2
Hungarian Cup semi-final
Debrecen 2 Tatabanya 0

May 4
Hungarian first division
Ujpest 0 Kispest-Honved 1

May 5
Zalaegerszeg 2 Videoton 1
Tatabanya 1 Vasas 4
Dunaferr 1 Sopron 0
Gyor 2 Debrecen 2

IRELAND
May 2
Irish premier division
Longford Town 1 Bohemians 3
Shelbourne 3 Shamrock Rovers 1

May 5
Glentoran 1 Linfield 0
Irish Cup final. Played at Windsor Park, Belfast After extra time. Score at 90 minutes 0-0

SCOREBOARD

Scorer: Michael Halliday 99
HT: 0-0; FT: 0-0. Attendance: 14,000

ISRAEL
May 5
Israeli Premier League
Maccabi Tel 7 Betar Jerusalem 0
Ironi Rishon 0 Bnei Yehuda 1
Ashdod SC 1 Zafririm Holon 0
Hapoel Haifa 3 Hapoel Petah 1
Maccabi 6 Maccabi Petah Tikva 1

ITALY
May 5
Italian first division
Bologna 1 Udinese 1
Lecce 0 Brescia 3

May 6
Inter Milan 3 Atalanta 0
Juventus 2 AS Roma 2
Lazio 2 Bari 0
Parma 4 Napoli 0
Perugia 2 AC Milan 1
Verona 2 Fiorentina 1
Vicenza 2 Reggina 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
AS Roma	29	19	7	3	57	28	64
Lazio	29	18	5	6	53	30	59
Juventus	29	16	10	3	48	24	58
Parma	29	14	8	7	44	22	50
AC Milan	29	11	11	7	46	40	44
Inter Milan	29	12	8	9	41	35	44
Atalanta	29	10	12	7	35	28	42
Bologna	29	11	8	10	41	40	41
Fiorentina	29	9	12	8	48	42	39
Perugia	29	10	9	10	42	44	39
Brescia	29	8	11	10	37	37	35
Udinese	29	10	3	16	42	50	33
Vicenza	29	8	7	14	31	42	31
Lecce	29	7	10	12	35	49	31
Napoli	29	6	10	13	27	44	28
Verona	29	7	6	16	31	51	27
Reggina	29	7	5	17	25	46	26
Bari	29	5	4	20	26	56	19

JAPAN
May 3
J-League
Grampus Eight 3 Cerezo Osaka 1
Gamba Osaka 3 Kashiwa Reysol 2
JEF United 2 Kashima Antlers 0
Vissel Kobe 2 Avispa Fukuoka 1
Sanfrecce Hiroshima 3 FC Tokyo 0
Tokyo Verdy 2 Yoko F Marinos 3
Shimizu S-Pulse 5 Consadole 2
Urawa Reds 0 Jubilo Iwata 2

LUXEMBOURG
May 2
Luxembourg soccer play-offs for the first division title
Ettelbruck 3 Hobscheid 0
Dudelange 1 Grevenmacher 1

NEW ZEALAND
5 May
Chatham Cup 1st round results:
Green Island 4 Northern 0
HHH United 2 Roslyn-Wakari 1
Otago University 2 Caversham 4
Waihopai 3 Queenstown 2
Brooklyn Nrth 6 Gisborne Thistle 1
Kapiti Hearts 0 Tawa 2
Lower Hutt City 8 PNBHS 0
Motoroa 2 Waimoiomata 1
Petone 2 Seatoun 0
Palm Nth 0 Island Bay United 5
Upper Hutt City 6 Waikanae 1
Wairarapa United 1 Woodleigh 2
Wangamui Athletic 3 Taradale 0
Waterside Kori 4 North Wllgton 1
Wllgton Maris3 Havelock North 2
Wllgton Utd 14 Gisborne Marist 1
Western Suburbs 7 Massey Uni 1

Sunday 6 May
Christchurch City 3
J Fahy 58, B Sigmund 69, og 53
Dunedin Technical 2
M McGregor 5, 40
Manawatu AFC 2
I Duker 47, S Cuncliffe 76
Central United 2
D Aliaga 14, D Koprovic 90
Tauranga City 4
D Bartosh 3, 16, 51; S Boyle 83
Metro AFC 0
University-Mt Wellington 1
H McCormack 36
Napier City-Rovers 2
P Halford 70, M Akers 76
Waitakere City 2
R Dawkins 24,T Stevens 47
Miramar Rangers 3
A Birch 19, G Brown 67, 86

NORTHERN IRELAND
May 3
Northern Irish premier division
Glenavon 3 Portadown 3
May 5
Northern Irish Cup
Linfield 0 Glentoran 1 (after extra time)

POLAND
May 5
Polish first division
Stomil Olsztyn 2 Legia Warsaw 1
Pgon Szczcn 2 Groclin Grodzisk 0
Slask Wroclaw 0 Orlen Plock 1
Amica Wronki 2 Ruch Chorzow 1
Odr Wdzlw 2 Ruch Radzionkow 2
Plnia Warsaw 2 Zaglebie Lubin 0
Gornik Zabrze 0 Widzew Lodz 2

PORTUGAL
May 4
Portuguese premier league
Benfica 0 Alverca 2
Braga 2 Maritimo 1

May 5
Portuguese premier league
Boavista 2 Gil Vicente 0

ROMANIA
May 2
Romanian championship division
Ptrolul Plsti 3 Dinamo Bucharest 1
Arges Pitesti 1 Brasov 0
Otelul Galati 0 Foresta Suceava 0
National Buch 1 Ceahlaul Ptra 0
FCM Bacau 3 Rocar Bucharest 0
Gaz Metan Mds 2 Gloria Bistrita 1
Steaua Bchrst 3 Unvrstta Criova 1
Rapid Bucharest 0 Astra Ploiesti 0

May 5
Romanian championship division
Dinamo Buchst 2 Ceahlaul Ptra 2
Rocar Buchst 4 Petrolul Ploiesti 1
Brasov 2 FCM Bacau 0
Univers Craiova 3 Otelul Galati 1
Foresta Suceava 0 Gaz Metan 0
Gloria Bistrita 2 Arges Pitesti 2

RUSSIA
May 5
Russian premier division
Spartak Moscow 3 Fakel Vronez 0
Loko Moscow 3 Alana Vldikvkz 1
Zenit St Ptrsbrg 0 Trpdo Mscow 3
Sokol Saratov 1 Krylya Svetv 0
Chem Nviisk 1 Dynamo Mscow 1
Rotor Vlgrad 1 Saturn Rmskye 0
Rstslmsh Rstov 1 Trpdo-ZIL 0

SCOTLAND
May 1
Division one
Livingston 5 Airdrie 0
Division two
Forfar 3 Queen of the South 1
Division three
Montrose 0 Hamilton 2
Peterhead 1 Elgin 1
May 5
Premier league
Dundee 2 Kilmarnock 1
Hearts 1 Rangers 4
Motherwell 0 Aberdeen 2
St Johnstone 2 St Mirren 2

SLOVENIA
May 3
Slovenian first division
Olimpija 1 Ajdovscina 2
Maribor 4 Velenje 1
Koper 3 Domzale 0
Nova Gorica 2 Celje 1
Dravograd 1 Murska Sobota 3
Prevalje 1 Sezana 0

SOUTH AFRICA
May 2
South African premier league
Ajax Cape Town 4 Ria Stars 0
Lamontville Golden Arrows 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 2
Played on Tuesday:
Jomo Cosmos 1 Orlando Pirates 1

SPAIN
May 5
Spanish first division
Celta Vigo 3 Real Madrid 0
Espanyol 0 Barcelona 0
Real Sociedad 1 Valencia 2

SWITZERLAND
May 3
Swiss Cup semi-final
Servette 1 Saint-Gall 0
Scorer: Alexander Frei 77
Lausanne Sports 0 Yverdon (II) 0
Yverdon win 4-3 on penalties

TURKEY
May 5
Turkish first division
Ankaraguca 2 Trabzonspor 4

UKRAINE
May 5
Ukrainian premier division
Dynamo Kiev 2 Metalurg Donetsk 0
Dnipro Dniprptrvsk 2 CSKA Kiev 0
Metalist Khrkiv 1 Shakhtar Dnisk 1
Tavria Simferopol 3 Karpaty Lviv 1
Metalurg Zaporizhya 0 Vrskla Plt 0
Kryvbas Kryviy Rih 1 Stal Alhvsk 0
Metalurg Mariupol 5 Nyva Trnpil 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo K	21	16	3	2	51	14	51
Shakhtr D	21	15	5	1	53	19	50
Dnpro D	21	14	4	3	30	14	46
Mtlurg D	21	9	9	3	25	18	36
CSKA K	21	8	8	5	27	20	32
Metalurg	21	8	4	9	29	26	28
Tavria	21	6	9	6	20	23	27
Karpaty L	21	8	2	11	30	35	26
Metalurg	21	6	8	7	24	27	26
Kryvbas K	21	5	6	10	19	30	21
Metalist K	21	5	6	10	20	33	21
Vorskla P	21	5	5	11	15	24	20
Stal Alch	21	2	4	15	14	42	10
Nyva Tern	21	2	3	16	19	51	9

Note: Where points level, the results between tied teams counted before goal difference.

WALES
May 1
League of Wales
Afan Lido 3 Rhyader Town 0
Bangor City 1 Aberystwyth Town 1
Caersws 2 Camarthen Town 2
Connah's Quay 1 TNS Llans 2
Barry Town 1 Wrexham 3

May 2
League of Wales
Oswestry Town 0 Flexsys Cefn 0
Afan Lido 3 Rhyader Town 0
Bangor City 1 Aberystwyth Town 1
Caersws 2 Camarthen Town 2

May 5
League of Wales
Aberystwyth Town 1 Port Talbot 0
Bangor City 3 Inter Cardiff 0
Barry Town 0 Newtown 2
Caersws 4 Llanelli 0
Connah's Quay 5 Rhayader Town 0
Cwmbran Town 3 Rhyl 2
Haverfrdwst 0 TNS Llansntaffraid 2
Oswestry Town 1 Afan Lido 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barry Town	34	24	5	5	84	30	77
Cwmbran	34	24	2	8	71	34	74
Carmarthen	34	17	7	10	68	39	58
Newtown	34	18	4	12	48	37	58
Caersws	34	16	9	9	72	39	57
Abrystyth	34	15	10	9	64	42	55
Rhyl	34	16	6	12	74	52	54
T.N.S.	34	15	9	10	64	47	54
Connah's Q	34	14	8	12	45	47	50
Haverford	34	14	7	13	56	55	49
Afan Lido	34	13	8	13	42	37	47
Rhayader	34	10	10	14	54	65	40
Flexsys C	34	11	5	18	60	70	38
Bangor Cty	34	10	7	17	56	84	37
Oswestry	34	10	6	18	40	74	36
Port Talbot	34	10	5	19	49	77	35
Llanelli	34	9	2	23	57	97	29
UWIC Inter	34	3	4	27	26	104	13

NSWSF
SUPER LEAGUE:
FIRST GRADE:
Macarthur Rams 4 (G King 30m Z Younan 31m G Attard 61m L Gunn 90m) MSC Liverpool 1 (C Green 33m)
Stanmore v Bankstown City W/O
Hajduk Wand v Fairfield Bulls W/O
AC United v Dulwich Hill W/O
Manly Warringah v Rockdale City Suns Washed Out
Hurstville City v Fraser Park W/O

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Rockdale	7	4	2	1	18	9	14
D'wich H	7	4	2	1	16	12	14
B'kstwn	7	4	1	2	10	6	13
H'ville	7	4	1	2	9	8	13
Manly W	7	3	2	2	14	13	11
Mc'thur	7	3	1	3	12	10	10
Fairfield	6	2	2	2	17	12	8
Stanmore	6	2	2	2	6	5	8
Fraser Pk	7	2	2	3	12	13	8
Hajduk W	7	1	2	4	7	13	5
MSC Lv	7	1	2	4	10	22	5
AC Utd	7	1	1	5	6	14	4

SUPER LEAGUE TOP SCORERS:
Steve Karavatakis Dulwich Hill 6
Spase Najdoski Rockdale 6
Leo Carle Rockdale Suns 5
Marc Hoenselaars Fairfield Bulls 5
Evangelos Petratos Hurstville City 4
Eric Williams Macarthur Rams 4
Matthew Borg Fairfield Bulls 4
Clinton Green MSC Liverpool 4

GRADE 21:
Macarthur 2 MSC Liverpool 1
Stanmore v Bankstown City W/O
Hajduk Wand v Fairfield Bulls W/O
AC United v Dulwich Hill W/O
Manly Warringah v Rockdale City Suns Washed Out
Hurstville City v Fraser Park W/O

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Macarthur	7	5	2	0	15	8	17
Fairfield	6	4	1	1	9	6	13
Manly W	7	3	3	1	13	6	12
AC United	7	3	3	1	12	8	12
H'ville City	7	4	0	3	11	10	12
Fraser Park	7	3	2	2	9	9	11
Hajduk W	7	3	1	3	10	11	10
Bks'twn	7	2	2	3	10	11	8
Rockdale	7	1	2	4	19	20	5
D'lwch Hill	7	1	2	4	12	18	5
MSC L'pl	7	1	1	5	8	14	4
Stanmore	6	1	1	4	7	14	4

GRADE 18:
Macarthur 2 MSC Liverpool 1
Stanmore v Bankstown City W/O
Hajduk Wand v Fairfield Bulls W/O
AC United v Dulwich Hill W/O
Manly Warringah v Rockdale City Suns W/O
Hurstville City v Fraser Park W/O

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Manly W	7	7	0	0	22	2	21
Macarthur	7	4	3	0	13	6	15
MSC L'pl	7	3	2	2	18	12	11
AC United	7	3	2	2	12	10	11
Fairfield	6	3	1	2	10	10	10
Bkstwn	7	3	0	4	16	11	9
Dlwch Hill	7	2	3	2	12	12	9
Stanmore	6	2	3	1	6	7	9
Fraser Park	7	2	3	2	10	16	9
Rockdale	7	1	1	5	12	22	4
Hajduk W	7	1	1	5	8	18	4
H'ville City	7	0	1	6	5	18	1

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE:
FIRST GRADE:
White City 8 (D Poljak 5/47m R Varga 29m R Mandic 37/46/70m C De Andre 65m D Mihajlovic 85m)
Auburn United 1 (C Kwangsik 60m)
Bathurst 75 1 (N Reid 56m) Hills United 3 (D Nash 35m J Miller 36m D Mitiga 83m)
Illawarra Lions v Belmore W/O
Hurstville ZSC v Sydney Uni W/O
Ryde City v Mt Pritchard W/O
Mt Druitt Town 1 (M Mohamad 15m) Greystanes 1 (B Racker 27m).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Belmore	7	4	3	0	15	10	15
Mt Prtchrd	6	4	2	0	17	4	14
Hurstville	6	4	2	0	13	4	14
Syd Uni	7	4	1	2	18	13	13
I'warra Lns	6	4	1	1	13	8	13
Hills Utd	7	3	2	2	15	10	11
White City	7	2	3	2	21	13	9
Ryde City	6	3	0	3	14	9	9
Bathurst'75	7	2	1	4	8	9	7
Greystanes	7	1	1	5	9	23	4
Mt Druitt	7	0	2	5	4	16	2
Auburn Utd	7	0	0	7	7	35	0

GRADE 21:
White City 3 Auburn United 2
Bathurst 75 3 Hills United 1
Illawarra Lions v Belmore W/O
Hurstville ZSC v Sydney Uni W/O
Ryde City v Mt Pritchard W/O
Mt Druitt Town 2 Greystanes 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
H'ville ZSC	6	6	0	0	22	5	18
Syd Uni	7	5	1	1	17	3	16
Ryde City	6	5	0	1	16	8	15
White City	7	5	0	2	17	11	15
Mt Druitt	7	4	2	1	12	8	14
Hills Utd	7	4	0	3	28	11	12
Greystanes	7	2	1	4	13	16	7
Mt Prtchrd	6	2	0	4	8	9	6
Belmore	7	2	0	5	12	16	6
Illawarra	6	2	0	4	8	19	6
Bathurst'75	7	1	0	6	8	22	3
Auburn Utd	7	0	0	7	4	37	0

GRADE 18:
Bathurst 75 0 Hills United 0
Illawarra Lions v Belmore W/O
Hurstville ZSC v Sydney Uni W/O
Ryde City v Mt Pritchard W/O
Mt Druitt Town 5 Greystanes 0
White City 12 Auburn United 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Mt Druitt	7	7	0	0	20	5	21
I'warra Lns	6	5	0	1	25	6	15
Ryde City	6	5	0	1	17	5	15
Hills Utd	7	4	1	2	32	11	13
Mt Prtchrd	6	4	0	2	45	10	12
H'ville ZSC	6	4	0	2	11	7	12
Greystanes	7	2	2	3	9	16	8
White City	7	2	1	4	18	16	7
Syd Uni	6	1	1	4	10	16	4
Bathurst'75	7	0	3	4	5	11	3
Belmore	6	1	0	5	6	20	3
Auburn Utd	7	0	0	7	5	80	0

FEDERATION DIVISION TWO:
FIRST GRADE:
Balmain 2 (M Civili 22m K Thulin 70m) The Wanderers 1 (A Fayad 13m)
Concord FC vs Hakoah W/O
Western Rage 0 Uni of NSW 1 (N Kodomichalos 60m)
Camden Tigers 2 (T Bazdaric 73m W Croker 78m) Central Coast Lakers 1 (J Peros 70m)
Parramatta City v Petersham W/O
Western Syd v Nepean Asoc W/O

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
P'matta Cty	7	4	3	0	11	5	15
West Rage	7	4	2	1	16	8	14
Balmain	7	4	2	1	14	8	14
Nepean	6	4	1	1	18	10	13
Wanderers	7	2	4	1	13	10	10
West Syd	7	2	3	2	11	11	9
UNSW	8	1	6	1	9	11	9
P'sham Syd	7	2	1	4	8	14	7
Camden	8	1	3	4	13	20	6
Hakoah	7	1	2	4	13	17	5
Central Cst	7	0	4	3	11	15	4
Concord FC	6	1	1	4	7	15	4

GRADE 21:
Balmain 2 The Wanderers 1
Concord FC 2 Hakoah 2
Western Rage 1 Uni of NSW 0
Camden Tigers 4 Central Coast 0
Parramatta City v Petersham W/O
West Syd v Nepean Assoc W/O

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nepean	6	5	1	0	12	5	16
Wanderers	7	4	2	1	22	9	14
P'sham Syd	7	4	1	2	12	7	13
Balmain	7	4	0	3	10	13	12
West Rage	7	3	2	2	17	16	11
Camden	8	3	2	3	16	23	11
UNSW	8	2	3	3	7	8	9
Hakoah	8	2	3	3	11	16	9
West Syd	7	2	2	3	17	13	8
P'matta C	7	2	1	4	10	14	7
Cntrl Cst	7	1	3	3	15	18	6
Ccord FC	7	0	2	5	12	19	2

GRADE 18:
Western Rage v Uni of NSW W/O
Camden 2 Central Coast Lakers 1
Parramatta Cty v P'rshm Syd W/O
West Syd v Nepean Assoc W/O
Balmain 1 The Wanderers 0
Concord FC 2 Hakoah 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Central C	7	6	0	1	37	6	18
UNSW	7	5	1	1	22	8	16
Nepean	6	4	1	1	36	8	13
Camden	8	4	1	3	20	14	13
Balmain	7	4	1	2	20	15	13
WestSyd	7	3	2	2	13	17	11
Ccord FC	7	3	1	3	11	16	10
P'tta Cty	7	3	0	4	21	16	9
West Rg	6	2	2	2	11	8	8
Hakoah	8	1	2	5	16	25	5
Wand's	7	1	1	5	13	25	4
P'sham	7	0	0	7	1	63	0

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE:
FIRST GRADE:
Auburn Star 2 Granville Gland 1
Prospect Utd v Hawkesbury W/O
Trasandinos v Granville Gr W/O
Liverpool City 0 Sydney Cres 11
Kellyville Klts v Utd Eagles W/O
Colo Colo 1 Springwood 2.

RESERVE GRADE:
Auburn Star 2 Granville Gland 6
Prospect Utd v Hawkesbury W/O
Trasandinos v Granville Gr W/O
Liverpool Cty v Sydney Cres W/O
Kellyville Klts v Utd Eagles W/O
Colo Colo 1 Springwood 4.

FEDERATION DIVISION FOUR:
FIRST GRADE:
Schofield Scorp 2 Fairfield City 0
Sporting SCC v West Syd W/O
UTS v Kosciusko W/O
Bossy 4 Lithgow Workmen 4
L,pool Oly v Gladesville Utd W/O

RESERVE GRADE:
Sporting SCC v Western Syd W/O
UTS v Kosciusko W/O
Bossy 4 Lithgow Workmen 1
L,pool Oly v Gladesville Utd W/O

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE:
FIRST GRADE:
Manly Wrgh vs NNSW Acd W/O
Central Coast v Nth Wst Syd W/O
NSW Acad v Hajduk Wand W/O
Marconi v Nepean Assoc W/O
Wollongong v Sutherland W/O

GRADE 21:
Manly Wrgh vs NNSW Acd W/O
Central Coast v Nth Wst Syd W/O
NSW Acad v Hajduk Wand W/O
Marconi 3 Nepean Association 2
Wollongong v Sutherland W/O

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE:
FIRST GRADE:
Bathurst Cty 1 Ptrshm Syd Dist 2
Bathurst Cty 4 St George Assoc 1
Coasties v Roseland W/O
Macarthur 0 The Ravens 1
Granville Assoc v Inter CSI W/O
UWS Campbelltown 0 UTS 3

GRADE 19:
Bathurst Cty 0 St George 0
Coasties v Roseland Raptors W/O
Macarthur Rams 1 The Ravens 3
Granville v Inter Lions/CSI W/O
UWS Campbelltown 3 UTS 4
Bathurst Cty 3 Ptrshm Syd Dist 0

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE:
GRADE 13:
Manly W 0 Sydney Olympic 3
Sydney United 4 Eastern Sub 1
Newcastle Utd 1 Central Cst 3
Sutherland Shire 0 Blacktown 2
St George 0 Bankstown City 2
Canterbury 3 Fairfield Bulls 1
Leichhardt 1 Macarthur Rams 0
Parramatta 0 Penrith Panthers 1
Marconi 1 Wollongong Wolves 4
Northern Sprt 6 Bonnyrigg 0

Grade 13s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Blacktown	7	7	0	0	36	2	21
Syd Oly	7	7	0	0	20	3	21
Nthn Spirit	7	6	0	1	30	3	18
Leichhardt	8	4	3	1	14	5	15
Cant Mrck	8	5	0	3	14	7	15
Manly W	8	4	2	2	14	9	14
Central Cst	8	4	1	3	9	12	13
Macarthur	8	4	0	4	13	10	12
Marconi	8	3	3	2	13	11	12
W,gong	7	4	0	3	11	11	12
Sydney Utd	7	3	2	2	11	10	11
Penrith	8	3	2	3	9	13	11
Sutherland	8	3	1	4	13	7	10
Bankstown	8	3	1	4	16	13	10
Parramatta	7	2	0	5	6	13	6
St George	8	1	2	5	5	15	5
Fairfield	8	1	2	5	5	20	5
Bonnyrigg	8	1	2	5	7	29	5
Newcastle	8	0	2	6	7	26	2
East Sub	8	0	1	7	5	39	1

GRADE 14:
Manly W 0 Sydney Olympic 9
Sydney United 4 Eastern Sub 2
Newcastle Utd 4 Central Cst 1
Sutherland Shire 0 Blacktown 0
St George 0 Bankstown City 7
Canterbury 2 Fairfield Bulls 0
Leichhardt Tigers 1 Macarthur 3
Parramatta 0 Penrith Panthers 0
Marconi 1 Wollongong Wolves 0
Northern Sprt 9 Bonnyrigg 1

Grade 14s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Nthn Sprt	7	7	0	0	40	3	21

SCOREBOARD

Marconi	8	6	1	1	21	8	19
Sydney Oly	7	6	0	1	34	9	18
Blacktown	7	5	2	0	25	3	17
Newcastle	8	5	1	2	27	12	16
Sydney Utd	7	5	1	1	7	7	16
Bankstown	8	5	0	3	21	13	15
Sutherland	8	4	2	2	20	10	14
W,gong	7	4	1	2	1	5	7 13
Parramatta	7	3	3	1	11	5	12
Bonnyrigg	8	4	0	4	15	24	12
Macarthur	8	3	1	4	12	13	10
Leichhardt	8	3	0	5	9	16	9
Penrith	8	1	4	3	8	20	7
C,bury M	8	1	2	5	7	17	5
St George	8	1	2	5	8	33	5
Central Cst	8	1	1	6	4	20	4
EastSub	8	1	1	6	8	30	4
Manly W	8	1	0	7	3	30	3
Fairfield	8	0	0	8	1	26	0

GRADE 15:
Manly W 1 Sydney Olympic 2
Sydney United 2 Eastern Sub 0
Newcastle Utd 0 Central Cst 2
Sutherland Shire 1 Blacktown 2
St George vs Bankstown W/O
Canterbury 2 Fairfield Bulls 1
Leichhardt Tigers 3 Macarthur 3
Parramatta 1 Penrith Panthers 0
Marconi 3 Wollongong Wolves 0
Northern Spirit 1 Bonnyrigg 1

Grade 15s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Marconi	8	8	0	0	27	5	24
Blacktown	7	7	0	0	28	7	21
Nthn Spirit	7	6	1	0	24	4	19
Sydney Utd	7	6	1	0	11	2	19
Newcastle	8	5	0	3	14	13	15
Central Cst	8	4	1	3	15	8	13
Parramatta	7	4	0	3	16	9	12
Sydney Oly	7	4	0	3	12	11	12
Manly W	8	3	1	4	10	12	10
Leichhardt	8	3	1	4	13	18	10
Bonnyrigg	8	2	3	3	12	9	9
W,gong	7	2	2	3	12	15	8
Bankstown	7	2	2	3	13	17	8
St George	7	1	3	3	3	10	6
Penrith	8	1	2	5	6	14	5
Sutherland	8	1	2	5	5	13	5
Fairfield	8	1	2	5	9	18	5
Canterbury	8	1	2	5	7	17	5
Macarthur	8	0	4	4	6	21	4
Eastern Sub	8	1	1	6	9	29	4

GRADE 17:
Manly W 0 Sydney Olympic 3
Sydney United 5 Eastern Sub 0
Newcastle United 0 Central Cst 1
Sutherland Shire 0 Blacktown 1
St George vs Bankstown W/O
Canterbury vs Fairfield W/O
Leichhardt vs Macarthur W/O
Parramatta 2 Penrith Panthers 1
Marconi 1 Wollongong Wolves 0
Northern Spirit 3 Bonnyrigg 0

Grade 17s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Nthn Sprt	7	7	0	0	21	3	21
Parramatta	7	6	1	0	25	8	19
Syd Oly	7	6	0	1	20	6	18
Marconi	8	6	0	2	15	8	18
Blacktown	7	5	1	1	18	7	16
Bonnyrigg	8	4	3	1	17	8	15
Sydney Utd	7	4	1	2	18	13	13
C,bury Mck	7	4	1	2	14	11	13
Fairfield	7	3	1	3	18	13	10
Sutherland	8	3	1	4	13	14	10
St George	7	3	1	3	10	14	10
Leichhardt	7	3	1	3	8	14	10
Penrith	8	3	0	5	12	12	9
W,gong	7	2	1	4	7	12	7
Central Cst	8	2	1	5	10	16	7
Bankstown	7	1	2	4	6	13	5
Newcastle	8	1	1	6	8	15	4
Manly W	8	1	1	6	7	22	4
East Sub	8	0	2	6	8	27	2
Macarthur	7	0	1	6	5	24	1

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE:
GRADE 13:
Hills United 2 Blacktown Assoc 1
Illawarra Lions 2 AC United 1
Hajduk Wanderers 4 Ryde City 0
Stanmore 0 Ku-Ring-Gai Assoc 0
Central Cst 1 Southern Branch 5
Mt Pritchard 1 Nepean Assoc 4

Grade 13s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Sth Branch	7	6	1	0	22	2	19
AC United	7	5	1	1	17	8	16
Nepean	7	4	3	0	18	4	15
Hills Utd	7	4	2	1	14	6	14
Blacktown	7	4	0	3	12	9	12
Illawarra	7	3	2	2	11	12	11
Ku-Ring-G	7	2	3	2	9	8	9
Central Cst	7	1	3	3	9	15	6
Stanmore	7	1	2	4	6	18	5
Hajduk W	7	1	1	5	7	15	4
Mt Pritchrd	7	1	1	5	8	19	4
Ryde City	7	0	1	6	2	19	1

GRADE 14:
Hills United 2 Blacktown Assoc 1
Illawarra Lions 1 AC United 1
Hajduk Wanderers 0 Ryde City 2
Stanmore Hawks 0 Ku-Ring-Gai 3
Central Cst 0 Southern Branch 1
Mt Pritchard 1 Nepean Assoc 2

Grade 14s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Sth Branch	7	7	0	0	25	4	21
Ryde City	7	5	1	1	18	8	16
Hajduk W	7	5	0	2	11	6	15
Central Cst	7	4	2	1	11	3	14
Hills Utd	7	3	2	2	17	9	11
Stanmore	7	3	0	4	13	18	9
Ku-Ring-G	7	2	2	3	12	7	8
Blacktown	7	2	1	4	6	17	7
Nepean	7	1	2	4	7	13	5
AC United	7	1	2	4	5	14	5
Illawarra	7	1	2	4	5	14	5
Mt Ptchrd	7	1	0	6	5	22	3

GRADE 15:
Hills United 2 Blacktown 2
Illawarra Lions 2 AC United 0
Hajduk Wanderers 5 Ryde City 0
Stanmore Hawks 1 Ku-Ring-Gai 2
Central Cst 1 Southern Branch 0
Mt Pritchard 3 Nepean Assoc 2

Grade 15s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Sth Branch	7	5	0	2	17	8	15
Blacktown	7	4	2	1	20	10	14
Ku-Ring-G	7	4	1	2	11	7	13
Nepean	7	3	2	2	11	8	11
Central Cst	7	3	2	2	9	7	11
Hajduk	7	3	1	3	15	14	10
AC United	7	3	1	3	11	13	10
Illawarra	7	3	1	3	9	11	10
Mt Prtchrd	7	2	2	3	13	14	8
Hills United	7	2	2	3	11	15	8
Stanmore	7	1	3	3	9	14	6
Ryde City	7	0	1	6	5	20	1

GRADE 16:
Hills United 2 Blacktown Assoc 1
Illawarra Lions vs AC Utd W/O
Hajduk Wanderers 0 Ryde City 2
Stanmore Hawks 1 Ku-Ring-Gai 1
Central Cst 3 Southern Branch 2
Mt Pritchard 0 Nepean 0

Grade 16s	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Stanmore	7	4	2	1	10	5	14
Mt Prtchrd	7	4	2	1	10	6	14
Sth Branch	7	4	2	1	12	9	14
Central Cst	7	4	1	2	11	7	13
AC United	6	4	0	2	9	8	12
Hills Utd	7	3	1	3	9	9	10
Nepean	7	3	1	3	5	7	10
Ku-Ring-G	7	2	3	2	13	9	9
Ryde City	7	2	1	4	9	14	7
Blacktown	7	1	2	4	8	11	5
Hajduk	7	1	1	5	8	14	4
Illawarra	6	1	0	5	6	11	3

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE:
GRADE 13:
Schofield 7 MSC Liverpool 1
Camden Tigers 3 Mt Druitt Town 0
Dulwich Hill 2 Granville Assoc 1
Hurstville City 0 Hawkesbury 0
Rockdale City 1 Parramatta City 0
GRADE 14:
Schofield 3 MSC Liverpool 0
Camden Tigers 0 Mt Druitt Town 0
Dulwich Hill 2 Granville 2
Hurstville City 0 Hawkesbury 0
Rockdale City 1 Parramatta City 6

GRADE 15:
Schofield 2 MSC Liverpool 2
Camden Tigers 1 Mt Druitt Town 0
Dulwich Hill 4 Granville Assoc 0
Hurstville City 1 Hawkesbury 3
Rockdale City 2 Parramatta City 4

GRADE 16:
Schofield 2 MSC Liverpool 0
Camden Tigers 2 Mt Druitt Town 4
Dulwich Hill 2 Granville Assoc 4
Hurstville City 3 Hawkesbury 2
Rockdale City 1 Parramatta City 3

SUPER CADET LEAGUE:
GRADE 11:
Sydney United v East Sub W/O
Manly Warr v Sydney Oly W/O

Brazilian superstar Romario. If Brazil keep on sliding they could well face the Socceroos in their bid to reach the World Cup Finals.

Canterbury Marrick 1 Fairfield 0
Sutherland Shire 0 Blacktown 5
St George 4 Bankstown City 0
Leichhardt Tigers 0 Macarthur 1
Parramatta 1 Penrith Panthers 0
Marconi 1 Wollongong Wolves 3
Northern Spirit 10 Bonnyrigg 0

GRADE 12:
Sydney Utd v East Subs W/O
Manly Warr v Sydney Oly W/O
Canterbury Marrick 0 Fairfield 2
Sutherland Shire 0 Blacktown 4
St George 5 Bankstown City 0
Leichhardt Tigers 2 Macarthur 1
Parramatta 1 Penrith Panthers 1
Marconi 2 Wollongong Wolves 0
Northern Spirit 2 Bonnyrigg 0

GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE:
GRADE 16:
Nepean Assoc 11 Hajduk 0
Manly W 1 Nrth Wst Syd GYL 1
Bankstown 0 Cmpblltwn Mac 4
Blacktown 1 Macarthur Rams 3
Marconi 8 Central Coast Coasties 0
Wollongong v Ku-Ring-Gai W/O
Sutherland v Sthern Branch W/O

GRADE 14:
Blacktown 1 Macarthur Rams 0
Marconi 2 Central Coast Coasties 0,
Wollongong v Ku-Ring-Gai W/O
Sutherland v Sthern Branch W/O
Nepean Assoc 6 Hajduk 1
Manly W 0 Nth Wst Syd GYL 1
Bankstown 1 Cmpblltwn Mac 0

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE:
GRADE 11:
Illawarra Lions v Cntrl Cst W/O
Hajduk Wand v Mt Prtchrd W/O
Camden 6 Hurstville City 0
Mt Druitt Town 1 MSC Liverpool 3
Parramatta City v Hills United W/O
AC United v Rockdale City W/O
Stanmore v Schofield W/O
Ryde City v Hawkesbury W/O

GRADE 12:
Illawarra Lions v Cntral Cst W/O
Hajduk Wand v Mt Prtchrd W/O
Camden Tigers 4 Hurstville City 0
Mt Druitt Town 0 MSC Liverpool 0
Parramatta City v Hills United W/O
AC United v Rockdale City W/O
Stanmore v Schofield W/O
Ryde City v Hawkesbury W/O

St. George Soccer Association
Results of matches played 5th May 2001
9A Carss Park 2 Lugarno 1, Hurst ZSC 0 Cons Pt 1, Oat RSL 0 Bex Nth 3, Rock Suns 4 Pol Yth 1, S Souci 3 Minotaurs 0; 9B B Nth 3 Pens W 1, Carss Pk 0 K/grove 5, For Rngs 3 Cons Pt 0, Pol Yth 1 Kogarah 1; 9C ASOW 2 S Souci 1, Cons Pt 0 B Nth 0, Oat RSL 0 Peakhurst 3, Pens W 0 Rams RSL 6; 9D Cons Pt 7 ASOW 0, Oat RSL 6 Lugarno 0, Rams RSL 1 B Nth 0, S Souci 0 Arn Anr 2, B Hills Bye;

10A B Nth 0 Minotaurs 1, Lugarno 0 For Rngs 2, Rams RSL 1 Pol Yth 2, Rock Suns 3 Oat RSL 0, S Souci 3 Cons Pt 0; 10B Minotaurs 0 Cons Pt 2, K/grove 7 ASOW 1, Lugarno 0 Pol Yth 1, Oat RSL 0 Pens W 2, Peakhurst Bye; 10C B Nth(2) 4 Rams RSL 1, Cons Pt 0 Carss Pk 3, Pol Yth 0 B Hills 0, Rock Suns 7 Lugarno 1, S Souci 1 B Nth(1) 0; 10D K/grove 1 Raiders 2, Oat RSL 0 Cons Pt 2, Peakhurst 1 S Souci 0, Pens W 2 For Rngs 5, SGOSC 3 Kogarah 3;

11A Peakhurst 1 Cons Pt 5, Pol Yth 1 Carss Pk 3, S Souci 14 Kogarah 1; 11B B Nth 2 Pens W 3, Cons Pt 1 Oat RSL 1, K/grove 4 For Rngs 0, Kogarah 5 ASOW 0; 11C ASOW 0 Cons Pt 0, Oat RSL 0 Carss Pk 0, Peakhurst 1 Bombers 2, Pol Yth 1 S Souci 2, Rams RSL 1 Raiders 1; 11D Arn Anr LOF Pens W WOF, B Nth 1 Cns Pt 8, Lugarno 5 ASOW 0

12A ASOW 2 Pol Yth 2, For Rngs 0 Cons Pt 0, Lugarno 0 K/grove 0; 12B Carss Pk 0 SGOSC 5, Kogarah 2 B Nth 1, Oat RSL 5 B Hills 0, Pens W 3 Cons Pt 0, Pol Yth Bye; 12C B Hills 4 S Souci 5, Cons Pt 1 Oat RSL 5, Lugarno 1 Raiders 2, Rams RSL 1 For Rngs 4;

13A Cons Pt 1 Dolls Pt 2, For Rngs 1 S Souci 4, Kogarah 3 Pens W 0, Pol Yth 0 Oat RSL 4; 13B B Nth(1) 7 Kogarah 0, B Nth(2) 12 Lugarno 1, Carss Pk 0 Cons Pt 6, Oat RSL 1 Peakhurst 2;

14A Cons Pt 7 SGOSC 0, Kogarah 0 Pol Yth 1, Lugarno 2 Peakhurst 4; 14B B Nth 1 Peakhurst 3, Cons Pt 0 Oat RSL 2, Pol Yth 3 For Rngs 2, Rams RSL 6 Pens W 0;

15A ASOW 5 B Nth(1) 0, Cons Pt 2 Arn Anr 3, For Rngs 0 Oat RSL 9, Pens W 0 B Nth(2) 2, Rams RSL 2 Lugarno 1;

16A Kogarah 4 Peakhurst 0, Raiders 3 Cons Pt 1, S Souci 0 Pens W 4, ASOW Bye;

17A Carss Pk 2 Kogarah(2) 0, Peakhurst 2 Arn Anr 5, Pens W 3, Arn Scots 5 Rams RSL 3 Kogarah(1) 1;

19A ASOW 3 Lugarno 3, Cons Pt 1 Monterey 10, Oat RSL 0 Kogarah 4, Raiders 5 Pens W 0; PL.1 Kogarah 3 Cons Pt 1, Lugarno 1 Carlton 1, Oat RSL 2 Arn Scots 4, Pens W 2 For Rngs 3, S Souci 2 ASOW 3;

PLR Kogarah 2 Cons Pt 1, Lugarno 2 Carlton 4, Oat RSL 1 Arn Scots 1, Pens W 3 For Rngs 2, S Souci 3 ASOW 0; AAA Ansett 1 Pens W 0, Cons Pt 16 Pol Yth 2, Dolls Pt 2 ASOW 7, Hurst ZSC-S Souci W/O, Monterey 3 SGOSC 1; AAAR Ansett 3 Pens W 1, Cons Pt 2 Pol Yth 2, Dolls Pt 1 ASOW 3, Hurst ZSC 0 S Souci 1, Monterey 3 SGOSC 3; AAB For Rngs 3 Cons Pt 7, Monterey-Dolls Pt W/O, SGOSC Bye; AABR For Rngs 1 Cons Pt 8, Monterey-Dolls Pt N/R, SGOSC Bye; AAC Minotaurs 1 Peakhurst(2) 5, Peakhurst(1) 2 Carss Pk(1) 5, Raiders 0 K/grove 2, Carss Pk(2) Bye; AAD Arn Scots 3 Carss Pk 2, For Rngs-B Nth W/O, S Souci 1 B Hills 2; AAE B Hills 1 For Rngs 4, Carss Pk 4 Pol Yth 1, Cons Pt 0 K/grove 7, Peakhurst(1) 2 Peakhurst(2) 1; Sunday 6th May 2001 All games washed out

VSF PREMIER LEAGUE:
Firsts: Rd 13:
St. Albans Saints Bulleen Zebras
Port Melb'Rne Sharks 3 (Psarros P (2), Pappas J) Fawkner Blues 1 (Matkovic H) Bentleigh Greens 1 (Nilo J) Altona Magic 2 (Todorovski Z (2))
Altona East Phoenix 4 (El Kersh M, Suric J, Papadopoulos N (2)) Dandenong Thunder 0
Heidelberg United 0 Green Gully Caval'Rs 0
Essendon Royals 0 Preston Lions 0

STATE LEAGUE 1
Firsts: Rd 5:
Frankston Pines 0 Westgate 5 (Stevanovic A (3), Delic D, Lingurovski T)
Lalor United 2 (Komilionis C, Adomako K) Whittlesea Stallions 2 (Nicolini R, Giuliano A)
Fitzroy City Western Suburbs
Sunshine Georgies (Squillacioti L, Karasavidis K, Stojcevski P, Goutzioulis A, Nalpantidis B)
Westvale 5 Thomastown Zebras 3 (Rauf A, Spaliaras C, Iebbiano D)
Frankston Strikers 2 (Traynor C (2))
Oakleigh Cannons 6 (Jugovic D, Harbis K, Rossios N, Korkaric F (2), Metcalfe C) Spring White Eagles 0

The Back Page

PSV beat Heerenveen to retain Dutch league title

PSV Eindhoven retained their Dutch league title on Sunday when they beat Heerenveen 3-0 to put them beyond the reach of nearest rivals Feyenoord.

PSV's 16th league title in their history came after they lost their opening tie of the season 2-0 at De Graafschap, and then went 30 matches unbeaten.

With three games to go, PSV have 74 points and Feyenoord are second with 59 points.

Feyenoord, struggling since the winter break, lost 3-2 to lowly Fortuna Sittard on Sunday.

Ronald Hamming and Jochem van der Hoeven both scored for Fortuna in the first half. Igor Komeev then brought Feyenoord level with two goals late in the second half.

But Fortuna defender Joos Volmer decided the match seven minutes before time.

It was Feyenoord's fifth defeat in their last six matches.

Although Feyenoord have secured direct entry into next season's lucrative Champions League, their second place in the league is still not safe.

Roda JC lie three points adrift in third on 56 and Ajax Amsterdam, on 55, have a game in hand. Ajax will host Feyenoord next weekend.

Both PSV and Heerenveen started the match carefully.

It took until the 33rd minute for PSV to break the deadlock when Heerenveen winger Mika Nurmela lost possession in defence to give Arnold Bruggink space to open the scoring.

In the 66th minute, captain Mark van Bommel doubled the score after he was freed on the right and netted via the far post.

Four minutes later, the PSV fans began celebrating in earnest when Dutch leading scorer Mateja Kezman met a Van Bommel cross to score his 23rd goal of the season from close range.

PSV are still hunting a league and cup double.

They play Twente Enschede in the Dutch Cup final on May 24.

Goalkeeper Ronald Waterreus said that PSV's success hinged on their team unity.

"Now you see that a team without real stars can become champion," he said.

Waterreus, who conceded just 18 goals in 30 matches, left the pitch in the second half with a torn calf muscle.

It is doubtful if he will play again this season.

PSV striker Ruud van Nistelrooy, who missed most of the season and was out injured when the club won the 1999-2000 title, relished the prospect of a Dutch double.

"If we win the Cup final, I can go to Manchester United with a satisfied feeling," said Van Nistelrooy, who has signed a lucrative deal with the English premier league side.

Crozier defends FA over Wembley crisis

FOOTBALL Association chief Adam Crozier has admitted that the FA deserved some of the flak it received last week over the Wembley stadium project.

But the association's chief executive also sought to set the record straight on several aspects of the planned redevelopment, which is now in jeopardy over a lack of funding.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair said last week the FA had failed to bridge a funding gap -- estimated at 100 million to 150 million pounds -- from city backers and could not now proceed with the project.

Writing in Saturday's edition of *The Times*, Crozier said: "Those of us responsible for the Wembley project have deserved some of the criticism that has come our way this week, but let us put things into some perspective.

"Wembley Stadium is not the Millennium Dome Mark II, we have done the professional and responsible thing by stopping and admitting that we have a problem before work has begun."

He added: "The stark alternative was to risk bankrupting a not-for-profit organisation that has been in existence for more than 100 years."

He also countered some of the objections raised about the search for a new national stadium, whose estimated cost has soared from 240 million pounds to 660 million pounds and whose redevelopment has fallen at least two years behind schedule.

"It seems impossible for people to believe that football cannot afford to build its own stadium because of the riches in the game, but they need to understand that the FA is not the premier league.

"That body is made up of clubs, many of them PLCs, who could not possibly justify contributing to some whip-round for a national stadium. It is a non-starter."

As for the FA's ability to pay, drawing on a 400-million-pound broadcast deal over three years, Crozier said: "That income has to be set against the 125 million pounds that would have to be invested immediately in Wembley and a 55 million pound annual outlay for the foreseeable future.

"The FA simply could not have made the repayments and the bank would have then taken control of a vital part of the national game."

Crozier also argued that national stadiums around the world were built with government funds, given the scale of the projects, and said that the French Government was subsiding losses of 10 million pounds a year for the Stade de France in Paris.

As well as accepting that all parties involved should be blamed for what has happened, Crozier feels that it is time to move forward in a constructive manner.

"We all have to share the blame, but there is nothing to be gained now from mudslinging.

"We have to work through all the options, which range from carrying on with the original design, looking outside London or seeking an anchor tenant."

He continued: "Each has difficulties.

"Refurbishing the existing stadium will reduce the capacity to 65,000 once the comfort and sight lines have been improved.

"In an ideal world, there would be a wonderful new stadium on the old site, but we need help."

Ambitious Lyon clinch first trophy in 28 years

By Pierre Sentier
in Paris

A GOAL deep into extra time by substitute Patrick Muller gave ambitious Olympique Lyon a 2-1 victory over Monaco in the French League Cup final on Saturday and their first trophy for 28 years.

Lyon, who are still chasing their first ever league title, won the French Cup in 1973.

They were League Cup runners-up after losing on penalties to Metz in 1996.

"It's just wonderful and it's a great relief as we have been waiting for this for such a long time," Lyon chairman Jean-Michel Aulas said.

"It's a great day in the history of the club.

"We once came very close to this trophy, but we failed to take it," said Aulas.

"But we never gave it up and tonight our efforts paid back."

Monaco failed to salvage a disappointing season and the defeat was a blow to their chances of taking part in the UEFA Cup next season.

They now need second-placed Lyon to finish in the top three in the league and secure a Champions League berth.

"We put all our hopes into this final but eventually lost it," said Monaco midfielder Ludovic Giuly.

"It's really disappointing as we had a poor season and we badly wanted to win something.

"But we made too many mistakes in this match, as we have done throughout the season," he said.

"Now we will have to learn from this defeat and bounce back."

In a tense match, Lyon went in front thanks to defender Claudio Caçapa who combined in a set piece with striker Steve Marlet to find goalkeeper Stéphane Porato from close range in the 33th minute.

Monaco, who squandered good scoring chances by Shabani Nonda and Marco Simone in the first 10 minutes, saw their efforts rewarded after the break.

Nonda equalised, volleying home from inside the box in the 64th to leave Lyon goalkeeper Gregory Coupet stranded.

Muller, who came on for midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe, slotted home a cross by striker Sonny Anderson in the 117th minute to seal the match.

"This match is just like our season as we collected won matches in the very last minutes," said Lyon coach Jacques Santini.

"I'm just happy because Lyon proved tonight they are a great side," striker Sydney Govou said.

"We reacted when we had to and it's what made us win."

Italian Football Federation ends foreigner limit

THE Italian Football Federation have scrapped all restrictions limiting the number of non-European Union (EU) players that clubs can field in the Serie A.

The Federation's Federal Court said on Friday the decision had immediate effect -- meaning that clubs could now field as many foreigners as they wish.

Serie A clubs had been allowed to register five non-EU players, of whom only three were allowed to play in a given match.

However, the court have also asked Italy's Olympic Committee to look into the issue of non-EU players and the national identity of Italian football.

The previous restrictions had led to a number of South American players qualifying as "EU players" after gaining passports on the basis of European ancestry.

A number of Serie A clubs including Inter Milan, Udinese and AC Milan face possible fines and suspensions for allegedly playing footballers with false passports.

Omonia Nicosia win Cyprus league title

GERMAN striker Rainer Rauffmann scored a hat-trick as Omonia Nicosia clinched the Cyprus league title for the first time since 1993 with a 4-1 home win over Aris Limassol on Saturday.

They are now six points clear of nearest rivals Anorthosis Famugusta and Olympiakos Nicosia, who meet on Sunday to decide the runners-up spot.

Omonia have won the league title 18 times.

Aris took the lead in the 26th minute with a long-range shot from Akis Lambrou.

Rauffmann equalised with a header two minutes before halftime and made it 2-1 with a shot in the 51st minute.

The German completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot in the 75th minute, taking his tally as leading marksman in the Cypriot first division to 30 goals.

The former Cologne striker was also top scorer in Cyprus in the previous three seasons.

Last year his tally was 34 goals.

Vesko Mihailjovic made it 4-1 with another penalty three minutes into injury time.

Omonia have 57 points in the 14-team division.

Aris, bottom of the table with four points, will be relegated to the second division.